THE POLITICAL IDENTITY OF THE DELHI SULTANATE, 1200-1400:

A STUDY OF ZIYĀ AL-DĪN BARANĪ'S *FATĀWĀ-I JAHĀNDĀRĪ*

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a textual analysis of the *Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī* ['Decrees on Ordering the (Governed) World'], written by Ziyā al-Dīn Baranī around the middle of the 14th century AD. Baranī was a courtier of Sulṭān Muḥammad bin Tughlaq [*r.* AD 1324-51] of the Delhi Sultanate.

Chapter 1 introduces the reasons for undertaking this research, in light of the prevailing historiographical opinions about this text. It also provides details of the manuscript studied and the issues and questions raised in the remainder of the dissertation. The text is unique in that it is the first prescriptive political text [in the 'Mirrors for Princes' *genre*] to be written in the Indian subcontinent by an indigenous Muslim. **Chapter 2** sets the text in its domestic political and intellectual context. Its three sections deal with the contested politics of the Delhi Sultanate, the time and space which Baranī's life occupied; this is followed by a section with quotes from the *Fatāwā* relating to the subject of service and loyalty; and the final section adds a socio-literary dimension by outlining his familial and educational details, both of which must have had some effect on his making as an intellectual. This is seen as important to the analysis of the text, the presumption being that the surroundings of an elite impact on an individual in important ways. **Chapter 3** follows, in a sense, from the previous chapter in that this too sets out a context for the text being analysed, but more in the nature of a history of ideas developing through the ages in the world of political Islam. It traces the development of the 'Mirrors' *genre* from pre-Islamic times to the subcontinent in the time of the Delhi Sultanate. It also focuses on certain motifs —justice, kingship, religion — which are also the organising motifs of the *Fatāwā*. This chapter therefore attempts to locate the text in an evolving literary context.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 deal with the manuscript/text itself, and comprise the main analytical chapters. The rhythm of these chapters is determined to some extent by the nature of the text itself. **Chapter 4** deals with the performance of kingship centred around justice in the text, juxtaposing religious and political prescriptions. The chapters depend greatly on quotations from the manuscript, which act as the locomotive of the chapters. This is intentional to enable the text to speak in its own language as far as possible, its unity having been fractured by the demands of this dissertation. **Chapter 5** focuses on Maḥmūd of Ghaznī, the protagonist and hero of the text. This chapter argues that Baranī employs the historical and mythical figure of Maḥmūd in a number of effective ways to create languages of command in the text, as also to acquire legitimacy for the text. The brief second section focuses on Razīyya to highlight the absence of the possibility of woman rulers in the *Fatāwā*. **Chapter 6** focuses on two further components in the text — the capital city and the subject-citizen — as the two primary locales for the performance of kingship. It argues that the text pays unusual attention to an image of the capital city, and the powers is allots to the subject-citizens in ensuring that political rulership does not become excessive.

Chapter 7 summarises the conclusions, and explains how the study may be seen as one attempt at articulating the political identity of the Delhi Sultanate, through a complex articulation of the politically governed realms, i.e., *jahāndārī*.

CONTENTS

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Since the summer of 2000, I have been working regularly in the Student Recruitment Office of SOAS in various capacities. Over the years, Dorothy Leng, Cath Baldwin, Lesley Waldron and Michael Sherry [in Marketing] have given me work in the office, the income from which has allowed me to sustain myself especially since the summer of 2003. But they, along with ex and current colleagues, Ian Fielding, Rosalind Griffin, Emma Hewett, Abigail O'Hanlon, Trish Richards, Fiamma Shani and Dzidra Stipnieks have done much more than entertain my eccentricities, and provide a wonderful work-place. Through their everyday interactions, they have given, effortlessly, unconsciously and magnanimously, a sense of belonging to a foreign student that is invaluable and irreplaceable — something that I will cherish forever — and made a difference to my life in ways that they may never know.

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*

I owe my interest in the history of the Delhi Sultanate, and a fascination for sources to Firdos Anwar, who taught me as an undergraduate in Kirori Mal College, University of Delhi, from 1988-1990. My pursuit of the Delhi Sultanate and Barani have taken me in many directions since, and he would no doubt disagree with a lot of what is written in the following pages. Yet, anything that I have done or will do in the remainder of my life with this subject will always have in it something of what I learnt from him, driven by the sense of wonder he imparted. To him, I am forever grateful.

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SOAS was much different especially in terms of staff-student interactions; Joy Lewis's whims and Carol Miles's laughter made the department's office an enjoyable beat, which I remember very happily.

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Wife and steed linger, look up at the light,
At his window, which burns all night.
They must be patient, for a passionate man,
Is clutching his heart, and doing all he can,
To return to other loves in his life:
History, life's steed, and his 'dahling' wife!

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION, TRANSLATION AND QUOTATIONS

Transliteration

This dissertation being so heavily dependent on quotes in Persian, interspersed constantly with English, diacritical marks have been limited *only* to non-English quotations to retain readability. Thus, non-English words/nouns when used in English have *not* been transliterated: hence 'Ziya al-Din Barani' in English, but 'Ziyā al-Dīn Baranī' in Persian. The exception to this is the 'Abstract'.

For transliteration, a combination of the two standard styles — Steingass's *Dictionary* and *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, second edition — has been employed. Hence, 'Khalajī' [following Steingass], not 'Dhalajī' [from *EI2*], but 'al-Dīn' [following *EI2*], not 'u'ddīn' [from Steingass]. Foreign words common in English and listed in the *Oxford English Dictionary* have not been transliterated: therefore, 'sultan', but ''ulamā'. Proper nouns are written in modern derivatives, hence 'Delhi', not 'Dillī, Diḥlī, Deḥlī', 'Abbassid', not ''Abbāssid'.

Translation

In *The Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate:(Including a Translation of Ziauddin Barani's* Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī, *circa 1358-59 A.D.)*, Allahabad, n.d., p. xii, Mohammad Habib wrote that the published version was re-prepared keeping in mind the following objectives: 'Barani's long historical illustrations, unless relevant to his main theme, were to be drastically summarised; all repetitions were to be ignored; abuses which Barani repeats were to be translated only once or twice [...]; *Barani's confused arguments were to be put in as logical form as possible by a mere rearrangement of sentences;* elimination of unnecessary adjectives [...]; where Barani's discussion was long and tiresome, it was to be summarised within square brackets; [...] while remaining sternly faithful to the original, *an attempt was to be made to give the translation "the strength" which Barani would have certainly given to the original had he written it eight or ten years earlier'* [emphasis mine]. These considerations have made the published English translation less useful for a textual study like this dissertation, as indicated in the first few footnotes in chapters 2 and 4 where discrepancies are cited. Thereafter, there are no citations from *Political Theory*. Translations are cited from Afsar Afzal ud-Din, 'The Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī of Zia ud-din Barani, Translation with an Introduction and Notes', Ph.D. dissertation, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1955.

Translations from other languages, where applicable, are acknowledged in the 'Acknowledgements'.

Quotations

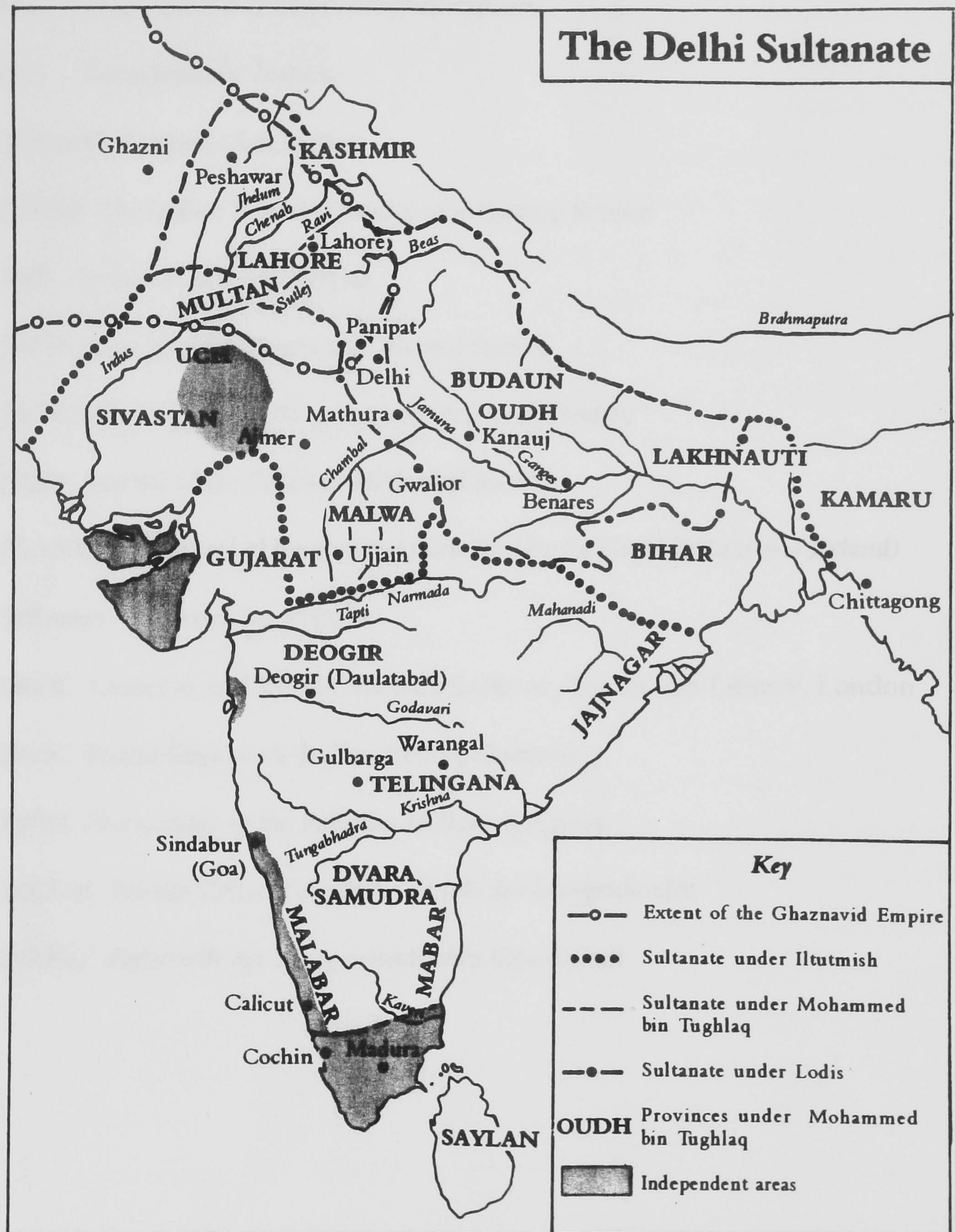
All quotations from primary sources appear in 11-point size, but are *not* indented. This is done intentionally to allow the narrative to flow via the quotations, in their own words. Quotes indented from the margin are from modern writings only, and where they have exceeded the standard limit of 45 words.

MAPS AND PLATES

Map 1

The Delhi Sultanate

[From: Charles Lewis and Karoki Lewis, *Delhi's Historic Villages: A Photographic Evocation*, New Delhi, 1997.]



ABBREVIATIONS

CSSH *Comparative Studies in Society and History*

Dictionary F. Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*

EI2 *Encycopaedia of Islam*, second edition

EIr *Encyclopaedia Iranica*

'Fatāwā' 'Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī'

IESHR *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*

IHR *Indian Historical Review*

JAOS *Journal of the American Oriental Society*

JASB *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay*

JPHS *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*

JRAS(GBI) *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (of Great Britain and Ireland)*

'Mirrors' 'Mirrors for Princes'

OIOC Oriental and India Office Collections, The British Library, London

PIHC *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*

PPHC *Proceedings of the Pakistan History Congress*

WZKM *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*

ZDMG *Zeitschrift der Morgenlandisches Gesellschaft*

INTRODUCTION: *BISMILLĀH*

This dissertation is a textual analysis of the *Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī* [lit. 'Decrees on Ordering the (Governed) World'; hereafter *Fatāwā*], written by Ziya al-Din Barani, d. *c.* AD 1358, an erstwhile member of the sultanate court in Delhi. It is a treatise on the art of governance, addressed to Islamic rulers. Both in intention and method, the dissertation has striven to remain steadfastly close to the text; in doing so, its methodology has been very strictly limited to textual references, and an analysis of the contents of the *Fatāwā*. But this historical pursuit is in part a bequest of initial historiographical assumptions [and later, presumptions] made about the text itself in modern scholarly writings. The Introduction wishes to lay out some details against which the study of this single but unique text should be seen, as a background for the validity of this exercise.

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The study of historical texts is a well-developed field in the history of the Western world, and scholars have long recognised its worth in the understanding of pre-modern societies. The effect of context upon the contents of texts — courtly and otherwise — has been a staple ingredient of such analyses, with varying results. Gabrielle Spiegel emphasised the importance of studying the social context in which texts were produced as essential to understanding their organisation and meaning, suggesting that texts often reflected and reproduced social realities. Other works include Otter's study of literary devices, seeing texts as sophisticated literary narratives attempting to integrate the marginal into the mainstream; Blacker's examination of 12th century historiography written for the Anglo-Normans where the historian's' 'vision' of History determines the contents of his work; and Wolf's focus on authorial intention of 11th century Italian historians in altering the reality of Normans as aggressive outsiders into one occupying legitimate authority.[1] Between them, these studies signify the importance of a variety of

[1] Gabrielle Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose in Thirteenth Century France*, Berkeley, 1993; M. Otter, *Inventiones: Fiction and Referentiality in Twelfth Century English Historical Writing*, North Carolina, 1996; J. Blacker, *The Faces of Time: Portrayal of the Past in Old French and*

factors that should be borne in mind to understand pre-modern texts, the awareness or apprehension of which enables a better understanding of the meanings of the texts being studied. To those listed above may be added other factors: patronage, reward, office, travel, displacement & resettlement, commerce, urbanisation, social mobility, education, prevalent social and literary tastes, etc. all of which contribute to the making of texts.

The tradition of Islamic textual studies, especially for the pre-modern period, is unfortunately not as developed. In recent years, some scholars have examined texts with remarkable sensitivity. These include K. A. Luther's study of Islamic rhetoric, Julie Meisami's history of Persian historiography, and Sholeh Quinn's study of Safavid chronicles, amongst others.[2] Some biographical studies, such as those of Ibn Khaldun and Hakim Sanai have also brought new methods to the reading of texts.[3] Yet the majority of works seem to be interested in information/fact-gathering from texts, stretching at best to 'source-critiques'! This last trait has meant that texts are rarely, if ever, studied for their 'internal dynamics', as an entirety in themselves.

> In the field of Islamicate history ... the handling of sources has been particularly problematic. The criteria of validity for the facts obtained from historical narratives are largely external; rarely are they related to the internal dynamics of the work from which the facts have been taken or to the interaction of the author's mind with the material he has presented ... and the relevance of the whole source to the history of ideas [is] entirely neglected. Instead of asking what a premodern Muslim author was trying to do as a historian and how he accomplished his goals, the scholar of

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Latin Historical Narrative of the Anglo-Norman Regnum, Austin, 1994; K.B. Wolf, *Making History: The Normans and their Historians in Eleventh Century Italy*, Philadelphia, 1995. This list is, of course, far from exhaustive, but has tried to focus on studies of texts between 12th-14th century, the period of the Delhi Sultanate.

[2] Kenneth A. Luther, 'Islamic Rhetoric and the Persian Historians, 1000-1300 A.D.', in James A. Bellamy, ed., *Studies in Near Eastern Culture and History in Memory of Ernest T. Abdel-Massih*, Ann Arbor, 1990, pp. 90-98; Julie S. Meisami, *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century*, Edinburgh, 1999; Sholeh A. Quinn, *Historical Writing During the Reign of Shah Abbas: Ideology, Imitation, and Legitimacy in Safavid Chronicles*, Salt Lake City, 2000. See also Chase F. Robinson, 'The Study of Islamic Historiography: A Progress Report', *JRAS*, 7, 1997, pp. 199-227; Fred M. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing*, Princeton, 1998.

[3] Aziz al-Azmeh, *Ibn Khaldun*, London, rpt. 1990; J.T.P. de Bruijn, *Of Piety and Poetry: The Interaction of Religion and Literature in the Life and Works of Ḥakīm Sanā'ī of Ghazna*, Leiden, 1983.

> Islamicate history has usually been content to ask what information the source provides that can be useful in solving *his own* problems.[4]

In the case of the Indian subcontinent, and especially for the period between the 12th-15th centuries, there seem to be almost none; this dissertation is an initial exercise attempting to study the 'internal dynamics' of one text.[5] Thus, it treats the *Fatāwā* as an entirety in itself for study, simultaneously suggesting that — like all other historical texts — it cannot and should not be seen in isolation of the context in which it was produced.[6]

The progressive interest of historians in the Delhi Sultanate has mostly been political in nature, peculiarly dependent on court chronicles and narrativised forms of history-writing. The resultant histories have therefore been determinedly monochromatic, concerning themselves with political and administrative institutions and structures, the 'arrival of Islam in India' being the springboard for the beginning of the 'medieval'. Predictably, sources which deal with political history in the conventional sense have received more attention and usage [Juzjani's *Tabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, and Barani's *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī* to name the two most prominent ones], while others [inscriptions, epigraphs, coins, architecture, etc.] and other textual materials [*sūfī malfūz*] are used and understood to support or complement the principal political narrative of history.[7]

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4 Marilyn R. Waldman, *Toward a Theory of Historical Narrative: A Case-Study of Perso-Islamicate Historiography*, Columbus, 1980, pp. 3-4, emphasis in original.

5 There is only one work which deals with a text on its own grounds, and is a path-breaking study which has altered the status of the text for modern history-writing; cf., Phillip B. Wagoner, *Tidings of the King: A Translation and Ethnohistorical Analysis of the* Rāyavācakamū, Honolulu, 1993; see also Muzaffar Alam and Seema Alavi, trans. with an Introduction, *A European Experience of the Mughal Orient: The 'Ijāz-i Arsalānī (Persian Letters, 1773-1779) of Antoine-Louis Henri Pollier*, New Delhi, 2001; for new ways of textual analyses for pre- and early modern texts of the subcontinent [although excluding Islamic literatures] see Ronald Inden, 'Introduction: From Philological to Dialogical Texts', in Ronald Inden, Jonathan Walters and Daud M. Ali, *Querying the Medieval: Texts and the History of Practices in South Asia*, New York, 2000, pp. 3-28; Velcheru Narayana Rao, David Shulman, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Introduction: A Palette of Histories', in *idem, Textures of Time: Writing History in South India, 1600-1800*, New Delhi, 2001, pp. 1-23.

6 There is one instance where the *Fatāwā* has been studied as a text in its own right, upholding a politico-moral royal universe and addressing issues in the text which will form a primary concern of this dissertation: Afsar Afzal ud-Din, 'The Fatāwā-i-Jahāndārī of Zia ud-din Barani, Translation with an Introduction and Notes', PhD dissertation, University of London, 1955, partially published as Mohammad Habib and Afsar Salim Khan, *The Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate: (Including a Translation of the of Ziauddin Barani's* Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī, *circa 1358-9 A.D.*, Allahabad, n.d.

7 For a useful summary, Peter Hardy, *Historians of Medieval India: Studies in Indo-Muslim Writing*, New Delhi, 2e, 1997, pp. 1-19.

The content of the *Fatāwā* being decidedly political has made it conspicuous to modern scholars. But its unusual nature – being a 'Mirrors for Princes' text, normative and anecdotal, and not a narrativised chronicle of events – made it less easy to handle as a source, and it came to be seen as affirming ideas addressed elsewhere in more useful historical texts! The provenance of a political court chronicle by Barani himself – the *Tārīkh* -- in two slightly different recensions, dealing with the history of the Delhi Sultanate, seemed to make the marginalisation of the normative *Fatāwā* to the status of a supportive text almost natural and unquestioned.[8] This is not the place to elaborate on the merits and demerits of such history-writing, but for the sake of the *Fatāwā* it is important to note that whilst it has been regularly used as a source, and its 'value' appreciated, it has also suffered from a pervasiveness of the initial impressions about the nature and purpose of the text. This has meant two things: a partial appreciation of the text as a source in itself, and an incomplete examination of the text in its own right.

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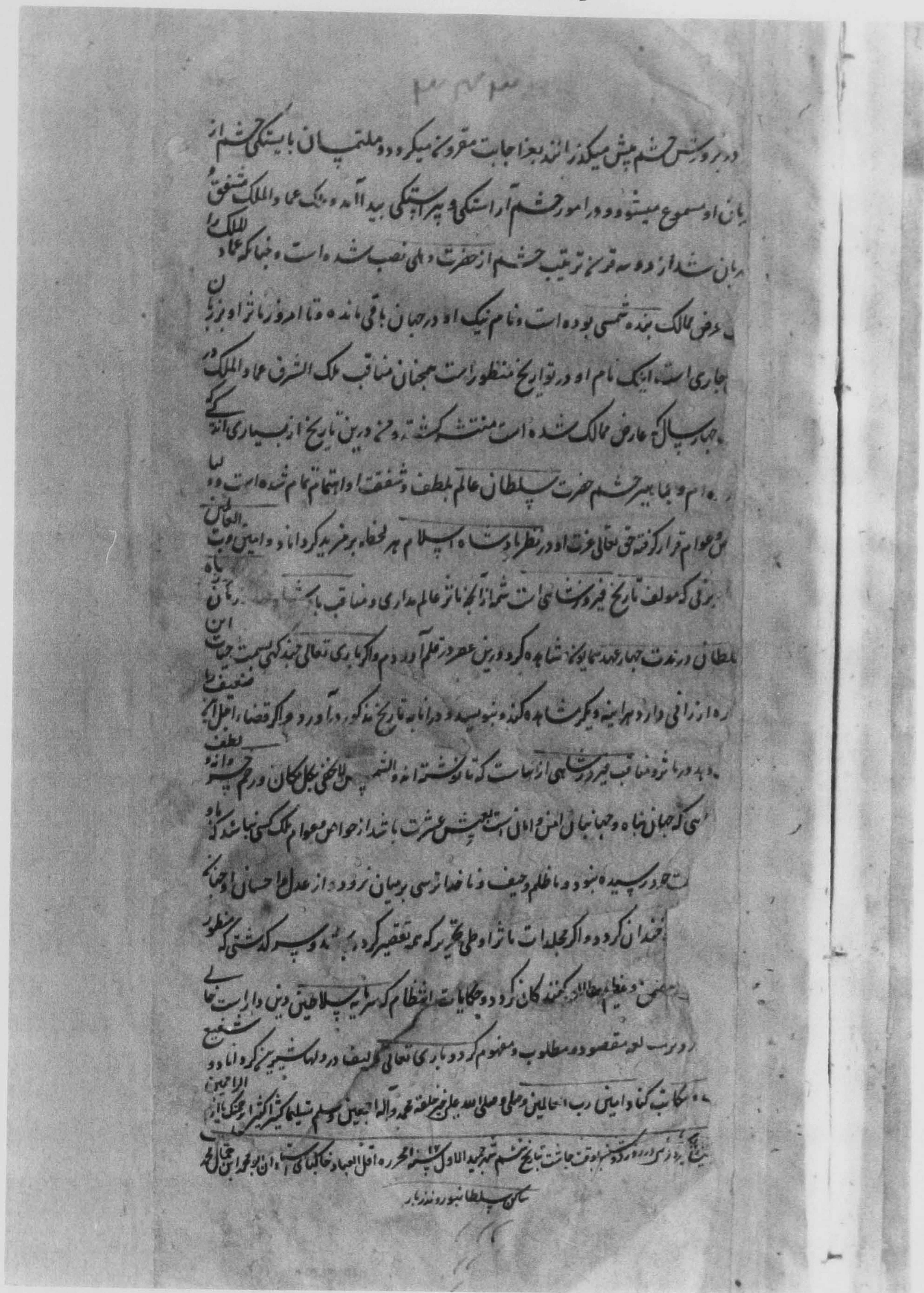
[8] Ziya al-Din Barani, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, ed. Saiyyid Ahmad Khan, W. Nassau Lees and Kabir al-Din, Calcutta, 1860-62 has been the 'standard' version [in retrospect, the second recension] of the *Tārīkh* in use; there are innumerable manuscript versions, and I have read the manuscript in the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna, No. HL 98; there are 3 manuscripts of the first recension: at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, Elliot Collection, No. 353; Raza Library, Rampur, No. 2053; and one manuscript in the personal possession of Simon Digby, mentioned in *idem, War Horse and Elephant in the Delhi Sultanate*, Karachi, 1971, p. 83. I have read the first two manuscript versions [Plate 1]. The importance of the first recension is examined in detail in I. H. Siddiqui, 'Barani's Account of the Sultans of Delhi in the First Version of *Tarikh-i Firuzshahi*', in *idem*, *Perso-Arabic Sources of Information on the Life and Conditions in the Sultanate of Delhi*, Delhi, 1992, pp. 151-66, and has been used extensively in Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History*, Cambridge, 1999.

Barani is known to have authored a total of 7 texts in as many years, between AD 1352-58/9; of these, only four are extant. Apart from the *Fatāwā* and the two recensions of the *Tārīkh*, he translated an Arabic 'History of the House of Barmakids' from the writings of Abu al-Qasim Taifi and Abu Muhammad Abdullah into Persian, *Tārīkh-i Āl-i Barāmikā*, Bombay, 1889; the 'Saḥīfā-i Na'at-i Moḥammadī' ['Book of Praise of the (Prophet) Mohammad'] is an unpublished manuscript, Raza Library, Rampur, No. 1895 [Plate 2]; extracts published in S. Nurul Hasan, 'Sahifa-i Na'at-i Muhammadi of Zia-ud-din Baranī', *Medieval India Quarterly*, 1, 3-4, 1950, pp. 100-6. This work seems to be the same as the 'Ṣanāi-i Muḥammadī', mentioned by Amir Khwurd, *Siyār al-Awliyā*, Delhi, AH 1302, p. 313. Four other works are mentioned in Khwurd, *ibid.*: 'Ṣalāt-i Kabīr', 'Ināyatnāmā-i Ilāhī', Ma'āṣir-i Sādāt', and his 'Book of Regrets', the 'Ḥasratnāmā', but are not extant. Extracts from the 'Ḥasratnāmā' are found in Khwurd, *ibid.*, pp. 313, 531-32, and Abd al-Haqq, *Akhbār al-Akhyār*, ed. Abd al-Ahad, Delhi, AH 1332, pp. 103-5; and Muhammad Akram Bin Shaikh Muhammad Ali bin Shaikh Ilahbakhsh al-Hanafi al-Barasawi, 'Sawāti' al-Anwār', unpublished manuscript, The British Library, London, No. 2705, listed in Hermann Ethé, *Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in the Library of the India Office*, Vol. 1, Oxford, 1903, p. 325 [#654, (333:23*p*)]. Some information is also available in Charles Rieu, *Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, Vol. 1, p. 333b; Ethé, *Catalogue of Persian, Turkish, Hindustani and Pushtu Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*, Cols 161-62; *idem, Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts*, pp. 89 [#211], 223 [#569], 1377 [#2563]; and C.A. Storey, *Persian Literature, A Bio-bibliographical Survey*, Vol. 1, ii, London, 1953, p. 1082 and *n*.

Plate 1

***Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, first recension, unpublished manuscript, Raza Library, Ms. no. 2053, fol. 343.**

[Used by Permission]



The name of the author [Barani] and the title of the work are in line 9 [marked with '◄']

Plate 2

Saḥīfā-i Na'at-i Moḥammadī, **unpublished manuscript,**
Raza Library, Mss No. 1895, fol. 1.
[Used by Permission]

The two main scholarly opinions regarding the *Fatāwā* as a source have been [a] that it outlines a 'political theory' for the Delhi Sultanate; and [b] that it should be seen in relation to the *Tārīkh*, 'the two works form[ing] the reverse and obverse of the same ideological coin'.[9] Both these opinions have shown an amazing tenacity, and the academic utility of the *Fatāwā* has almost always swung between these positions.

Afsar Afzal ud-Din's outstanding doctoral work on the *Fatāwā* was partially published in the early 1960s [co-authored with Muhammad Habib] as *The Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate*, and included an extensive Introduction and Appendix by Habib. Between the two, Khan and Habib provided for the first time a scholarly visibility to the manuscript, Habib's extensive annotations aimed at situating the text in its subjective context.[10] It was Habib's view that

> the *Fatāwā i Jahāndārī* of Khwaja Ziauddin Barani is at present the only known Indo-Persian work, *exclusively devoted to political theory,* which has survived to us from the Saltanat period .... A detailed introduction to the *Fatāwā i Jahāndāri – or rather the political theory of the Sultanat period* – is being prepared by me ....[11]

Further, Habib argued in his 'Introduction' that the *Fatāwā* was a unique text in that it was the first time that we had before us a contemporary source which sought to clear the political picture of its time by locating it in a broader ideological/theoretical framework of ideas. While Habib occasionally conflated political 'theory' with political 'philosophy', the main thread of his argument was that the *Fatāwā* provided readers with a framework of abstract political ideas within which the actual working of the Delhi Sultanate – as elaborated in the *Tārīkh* -- could be located. Habib [and by association Khan] seemed to uphold the idea that the *Fatāwā* should be seen as a

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[9] Hardy, *Historians,* p. 25.

[10] Mohammad Habib's role in deciding the academic fate of this text [amongst others] has been the matter of some debate, later scholars arguing that it was a combination of his commitment to Marxist-Leftist historiography which greatly coloured his academic vision; see Prabha Dixit, 'Professor Mohammad Habib's Historical Fallacies', in Devahuti, ed., *Bias in Indian Historiography,* Delhi, 1980, pp. 201-13; and in the context of the *Fatāwā* in particular, Raziuddin Acquil, 'On Islam and *Kufr* in the Delhi Sultanate: Towards a Re-interpretation of Ziya'-ud-Din Barani's *Fatāwā i Jahāndāri*', pp. 1-9, Paper presented at 'Rethinking a Millennium: India from the Eighth to the Eighteenth Centuries', Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, 2-4 February 2004 (unpublished).

[11] Habib, 'Introduction', in Habib and Khan, *Political Theory*, p. i, emphasis mine. The 'Introduction' referred to in the quote is published in *ibid.*, pp. 117- 70, 'The Life and Thought of Zia-ud-din Barani'.

'political theory/philosophy' against the backdrop of the *Tārīkh*: 'The *Fatāwā i Jahāndāri* is really the continuation of the author's famous *Tārīkh-i-Firozshāhī.* It strives to put into the form of a coherent system of political *philosophy* the basic ideas which Barani has already expressed in his earlier work [the *Tārīkh*].'[12]

Khan's own contribution remains the publication of the edited, Persian text with a separate Introduction appended to it.[13] Between her dissertation and the published Persian text, she was able to alert us to the importance of the *Fatāwā* in its own right, not once suggesting that it should be seen in the light of the *Tārīkh*. Khan's Introduction draws attention to a number of ideas and issues which are of interest to this dissertation. She discusses questions of authorship, the author's background, life and the personal circumstances in which the text was perhaps written; the form, content, scope and style of the work; an examination of the various historical anecdotes in the manuscript; and finally, a comparison of Barani's political doctrines with those of his near contemporaries and other medieval Muslim writers on government.

Her conclusions — the first results of her sustained engagement with this text — were that his life and tumultuous personal fortunes played an important role in his composition of the *Fatāwā*, making him both orthodox and bitter; that at least in the *Fatāwā* Barani was not very accurate in his historical citations;[14] and that when seen in the tradition of other Islamic 'Mirrors', it stands out as unique with regards to the Indian subcontinent and the Delhi Sultanate.[15] No other comparable text exists in Indo-Persian literature from the period. But she also subscribed to the idea of the *Fatāwā* being a 'political theory', one of greater value than its western counterparts since the

[12] Habib and Khan, *Political Theory,* p. 1; emphasis mine.
[13] Ziya al-din Barani, *Fatāwā i Jahāndārī,* ed. Afsar Salim Khan, Lahore, 1972; Introduction, pp. 1-133. This Introduction is a revised version of the 'Introduction' in her doctoral dissertation, pp. I-CLXVI. I have been able to locate only one further publication by Khan in English [see n. 16 *infra*].
[14] The question of the accuracy of Barani's 'historical acumen' has been a matter of much debate amongst historians studying both the *Tārīkh* and the *Fatāwā.* There is general acceptance that the anecdotes narrated in the *Fatāwā* are fairly inaccurate, sometimes intentionally and meaningfully so. Regarding the *Tārīkh*, Irfan Habib, 'The Price Regulations of Ala'u'ddin Khalji – A Defence of Zia Barani', *IESHR,* 21,4, 1984, pp. 393-414, maintains that the information made available by Barani is accurate and valuable, while Peter Jackson, 'Delhi: The Problem of a Vast Military Encampment', in R.E. Frykenberg, ed., *Delhi through the Ages: Essays in Urban History, Culture and Society,* Delhi, 1986, pp. 18-33, suggests that Barani's poor knowledge of geography may have contributed to him giving historically inaccurate information.
[15] Afsar Afzal-ud-din, 'Fatāwā i Jahāndārī', for authorship, pp. i-xix; for his biography and personal circumstances, pp. xx-xliv; for analysis of the form, content, etc., pp. xlv-lxxx; for comparison with other texts, pp. lxxxi-cxiii.

authors in the Muslim political scenario enjoyed 'the advantage of close access to the holders of political power, [and] were in a better position to expound *theories* tested on the touchstone of experience and reality.'[16]

This idea, that the text articulated a 'political theory' for the Delhi Sultanate, has been an enduring legacy of these writings.

A second important impression about the *Fatāwā* [visible in Khan and Habib's writings as well] is of seeing it as the corollary, framework, continuation, or reverse of the *Tārīkh,* and is perhaps best exemplified in Hardy's quote above.[17] Ever since Khan and Habib determined the 'theoretical' fate of the *Fatāwā,* it has been seen as a scaffolding through which the events and incidents narrated in Barani's more glorious chronicle of political events of the Delhi Sultanate, the *Tārīkh,* are better realised, and its meaning remains incompletely understood till set in relief against the *Tārīkh.*[18] The recent work of Muzaffar Alam, while appreciating the *Fatāwā* as a source unto itself whose 'abstract principles' and 'detailed historical anecdotes' shape one another, nonetheless feels the need to add that 'without examining his history and other works, [the] assessment of Barani's ideas must remain tentative.'[19]

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[16] Afsar Salim Khan, 'A Medieval Muslim Treatise on Government', *PPHC,* 8th session, Peshawar, 1958, pp. 137-45; emphasis mine. This resonates with what H. Dodwell had said many decades earlier: '...the Muslim chronicles are far superior to our own (English) medieval chronicles. They were written for the most part not by monks but by men of affairs, often by contemporaries who had seen and taken part in the events they recount.' Quoted in Hardy, *Historians,* p. 12. I am wary of accusing Habib alone of seeing a 'political theory' in the *Fatāwā,* since Khan identifies the manuscript for its 'singularity in the field of Indo-Muslim *theories* of government and politics' much before Habib became her co-author. Cf., Khan, 'Fatāwā i Jahāndārī', pp. 1-2. But there seems to be a lack of both consistency and clarity in the usage of these categories by both authors; cf. also, Khan, 'Medieval Muslim Treatise', p. 141, where she refers, more accurately I believe, to the *Fatāwā* as a 'dicta on statecraft'. See also her *Fatāwā,* p. 35, *n.* 1, where she speaks against seeing the *Fatāwā* as 'a work on history'.

[17] n. 9 *supra.*

[18] Irfan Habib, 'Barani's Theory of the History of the Delhi Sultanate', *IHR,* 7, 1-2, 1980-81, identifies a 'theory' in his *Tārīkh*; his position remains unchanged in *idem,* 'Ziya Barani's Vision of the State', *Medieval History Journal,* 2,1, 1999, p. 25. 'Theory' seems to be particularly popular; cf., Khurram Qadir, 'The Political Theory and Practice of the Sultanate of Delhi (1204-1412)', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, 1992.

[19] M. Alam, '*Shari'a* and Governance in the Indo-Islamic Context', in David Gilmartin and Bruce Lawrence, eds, *Beyond Turk and Hindu:Rethinking Religious Boundaries in Islamicate South Asia,* Gainsville, 2000, p. 220; and *idem, The Languages of Political Islam in India, c. 1200-1800,* New Delhi, 2004, p. 32: 'I have tried here to study his thought in the light of his *Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī,* even though I concede that without a comprehensive examination of his history and other works an assessment of his ideas can only be tentative.' While Alam's position seems justified in that one would need to read other texts of Barani to gain a more comprehensive knowledge of his 'political thought', Alam's statement too takes away from the singular importance of the *Fatāwā* as a source.

Comparisons with the *Tārīkh* are useful inasmuch as one is trying to marry two different sorts of texts written by the same person. But such an exercise should not translate into seeing the *Fatāwā* only in a supporting role. As a normative political text purporting to educate the rulers [of the Delhi Sultanate], the *Fatāwā* has an independent identity, and locates itself in a complex political web of contesting realities.[20] The inclusion of various groups, problems, issues and demands concerning political governance hardly allows the *Fatāwā* to be seen merely as a theory upholding a political reality explained elsewhere [*Tārīkh*].[21] Indeed, the *Fatāwā* shares common features with the *Tārīkh*. They deal with the same polity, engage with similar issues and problems, and are written by the same author. However, the dramatically different nature of the *Fatāwā* (as a textual *genre*) discourages it to be viewed as a companion volume to the *Tārīkh*, and merits an individual identity and treatment.

Barani's own texts suggest that at the time that he was writing, the distinctions between History, Politics and Religion were perforated, their ingredients often being similar; his *Fatāwā* is, in fact, an eloquent example of this 'interdisciplinary' phenomenon![22] In fairness to the use of modern disciplinary categories of analysis for a pre-modern text, the *Fatāwā* is most definitely a contribution to political science/ political thought inasmuch as 'political thought' [of which political philosophy is a sub-field] as Bogdanor explains, is 'intrinsically normative, concerned with what ought to happen' — up to this point it seems to fit with the purposes of the *Fatāwā*, but it is not a 'political theory' in that the text neither explains the working of governance in relation to actual ground realities nor provides viable solutions [especially if one bears in mind

[20] It should be mentioned here that the *Fatāwā* does not mention either the Delhi Sultanate, or any of its rulers by name even once in the text. However, the frequent mention of Hindus, and other subcontinental referents like dominance of Brahmans, the sack of Somnath, and the references to *rāīs*, *rānās*, idol worship, etc. urge us to consider the context as that of the Delhi Sultanate, coupled with our knowledge about the author's life.

[21] The advice of the *Fatāwā* do not add up to the realities of the Delhi Sultanate at all; the strident religious tone of the text, prohibiting the employment of Hindus, for instance, was not true of the court of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq, where he held office. Alam, *Political Languages*, p. 42, says: 'We know perfectly well that these ideas could hardly have influenced the policies of even the most powerful of the early Turkish rulers of northern India.'

[22] In the Introduction to the second recension of the *Tārīkh*, Barani has spoken extensively about the meaning, components and *his* understanding of History. I have discussed it in the context of his education in chapter 2. A useful summary discussion appears in Syed Hasan Barani, 'Ziauddin Barani', trans. Syed Sabah-ud-Din, *Islamic Culture*, 12, 1, January 1938, pp. 89-93; Hardy, *Historians*, pp. 20-39.

the realities of the Delhi Sultanate].[23] Alam is correct in suggesting that even a cursory reading would show that the advice of the *Fatāwā* had no practical application to the realities of the Delhi Sultanate, and so it is 'misleading' to call it a 'political theory' of the Delhi Sultanate.[24]

Any characterisation of the text in straitjacket categories [such as 'political theory'] makes it difficult to apprehend the multiple layers of meanings that the text cumulatively embodies. If taken literally, it would not be unfair to say that on many occasions the *Fatāwā* seems to be almost oblivious of the realities of the Sultanate's polity. Note, for instance, the stridently anti-Hindu tone in the two following quotes:

[...] if Mahmud [...] had gone to India once more [...] until the whole of India had accepted Islam, he would not have put his Hindu-slaughtering sword back in its sheath, *tīgh-i hindū kush rā dar na-āyam na kardī.* For Mahmud was a Shafii, and according to Imam Shafii, the order of Hindus is "either Death or Islam", *dar bāb-i hindū amal al-qatl va amal al-islām ast* — i.e., they should either be put to death or they embrace Islam. It is not lawful to accept Jizya from the Hindus, for they had neither a Prophet nor a (Revealed) Book, *va jizye shatand az hindū jāyiz nīst ke ishān ra kitābī va paigambarī nabūde ast.*[25]

It ought to be kept in mind, how for the honour of the True Faith, [the Caliph] Umar Khattab [...] treated 'the people of the Books', which are the *Torah* and the *Injil*. What treatment, then ought to be meted out to the worshippers of idols, which in the eyes of the angels and the inhabitants of Heaven, are lower than plants and more humble and of less value than stones and clods of earth, *pas bā ānān ke az jamād-i kamtar va az mang o kulūkh nazdīk-i mulk o khalq o āsmāniān-i khwārtar va bī maqdārtarand, che bāyad kard?*[26]

Ironically, the realities of the Delhi Sultanate as we know it from Barani's own *Tārīkh* [and other sources] do not allow us to believe that such statements as quoted above —

[23] V. Bogdanor, ed., *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Institutions,* Oxford, 1987, pp. 468-69, s.v. 'political science'.

[24] Alam, *Political Languages*, pp. 42-43 gives a series of examples to show how the *Fatāwā* does not represent the realities of the Delhi Sultanate, though he seems to suggest [see *n.* 21 *supra*] that the advice could have 'influenced' the rulers in any way. While agreeing with the general point being made by Alam, it needs to be borne in mind that the text was being written at the end of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign and could possibly not have influenced that which had already transpired – the examples that Alam lists.

[25] Mss. fols 11b-12a; text, p. 18; trans., p. 24.

[26] Mss fol. 203a; text, p. 277; trans., p. 408. Steingass, *Dictionary,* s.v. *injīl,* p. 107, 'Gospel'.

and the *Fatāwā* is replete with them — could act as a prism through which the Delhi Sultanate may be better governed, or its history better understood. For instance, Barani was writing in the court of Muhammad bin Tughluq, whose appointment of non-Muslims (particularly Hindus) is well-known.[27] Barani himself has a more ambivalent attitude towards their employment in the *Tārīkh* where he often passes over such realities in a matter-of-fact way when other contemporaries [like Isami] seek the Sultan's death as punishment for such sins. So, if Barani applauds the fact that Hindu nobles lost their privileges in Ala al-Din Khalaji's reign as part of his stringent measures, he also mentions how both Hindu and Muslim subjects prayed for Muhammad bin Tughluq's welfare when he became sultan, or how 'the hearts of the Hindus and Muslims were comforted' when Firoz Shah Tughluq became sultan [*dalhā-i khāss va avām-i itminān yāft va khātir-i musalmānān va hinduān bayasūd*].[28] As Irfan Habib notes, by the time of Barani's arrival in Muhammad bin Tughluq's court, non-Muslims were visibly integrated into royal service; Barani could have done precious little to stem the tide, especially if he wanted to protect his own privileged status. Thus (and quite to the contrary of the image that the quotes from the *Fatāwā* conjure), his inclusion of non-Muslims, particularly Hindus, as the subjects of the sultan in his *Tārīkh* seems to indicate neither severity nor orthodoxy.

This is not to suggest that he was not conservative in his personal views, but to highlight the impossibility of splicing information from the *Fatāwā* and the *Tārīkh* to create a unified, composite historical narrative, or Barani's political world-view. When examined closely, similar ambivalences may be found within the *Fatāwā* as well, to which we will return in chapter 4. In fact, given the distinct differences in their form and content, seeing the *Fatāwā* merely as a theoretical framework for the understanding of the *Tārīkh* is doing injustice to the agonised dynamism of the *Fatāwā*'s contents.

While the *Fatāwā* undoubtedly articulates a set of propositions regarding political governance, their theological overtone makes them impractical for actual prescription.

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[27] The only [unquestionable] document to survive from the Delhi Sultanate is a *farmān* of Muhammad bin Tughluq [dated 725/1325] ordering his officials to ensure 'good treatment of loyal non-Muslims', now in the Keir Collection, Switzerland. Cf., J.P. Losty, *The Art of the Book in India,* London, 1982, p. 55.

[28] *Tārīkh,* pp. 457, 547 [for quote]; see also Habib, 'Barani's Theory', pp. 112-13 and *n.* Barani's contemporary, Isami, *Futūh us Salāṭīn,*ed. A.S. Usha, Madras, 1948, p. 515 wanted Muhammad bin Tughluq's head for the crime of appointing Hindus.

This would hold true for any ruling dispensation within pre-modern political Islam, but particularly for the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate who were confronted — for the first time in the experience of expanding political Islam — with a subject population whose majority was non-Muslim, and who were unwilling to convert to Islam. To see the *Fatāwā* as an outline whose meaning remains incomplete unless tested on the whetstone of the *Tārīkh* is, in the opinion of this dissertation, to decipher somewhat dimly its actual worth as a text well-tamped with the creativity of an educated elite and courtier, and as an individual historical source for the study of the Delhi Sultanate. It should not be seen as a companion volume of the *Tārīkh* either, since the details of the latter often contradict the ideas/advice of the former.

Close to these, and in some ways interconnected, have been some other — equally partial and pervasive — opinions about the text. The *Fatāwā* admittedly deals with certain concepts in their Islamic 'forms' — justice, truth, freedom — the meanings of which can be understood adequately only by bearing in mind the Islamic theological academy and vocabulary. Many of these are articulated through 'conversations' in the *Fatāwā*. Peter Hardy's view that such 'conversations' represent the 'politico-religious thought of Islam in India' is based on such a reading of the text.[29] While such analytical categories do not clarify the nature of the text any more or less, they nonetheless create further stereotypes about the text which are difficult to overcome. The use of Islamic concepts and ideas does not necessarily make a text theologically 'Islamic' by definition; in fact, a close analysis may show such an exterior to be a literary device which both hides and reveals often dramatic contestations embodied in the text.

This is an especially serious question when the text is overtly religiously encoded, as the *Fatāwā* is; thus, some scholars have viewed the *Fatāwā*'s main concern to be [Islamic] justice [*'adl*], it being presented as the primary duty of the king.[30] This is perhaps a more tenable proposition than some others because the *Fatāwā* starts with, and continues in a somewhat profuse manner, to dwell upon *'adl*. But while there is an overlap of justice with religion [*dīn*] and 'ordering the world' [*jahāndāri*], in most

[29] Peter Hardy, 'The *Oratio Recta* of Barani's *Tārīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī* — Fact or Fiction?', *BSOAS*, 20, 1957, p. 317; *idem*, *Historians*, p. 25.

[30] The *Fatāwā* opens with this idea, which is discussed in detail in chapter 4; chapter 3 draws attention to similar conceptions of kingship in other polities in the subcontinent.

analyses the focus on justice has come to be seen more in its Islamic derivative, as the correct royal act of systematisation of the polity according to the laws of religion, rather than in its political derivative, as a tool to create an obedient subject-citizenry who may be [re]organised around structures of political governance. The following quote highlights the tactful assimilation — of justice, religion and kingship:

Sultan Mahmud advises: 'O sons of Mahmud, know that from the time of Adam to our own days, the nobles [...] agree that *justice is a necessary condition of religion, and that religion is a necessary condition of justice, ke 'adl lāzmīye dīn ast, va dīn lāzmīye 'adl ast* [...] in their mutual dealings a man may be (strong) or weak [...] Muslim or *non-Muslim* [...]The distinction between the deserving and the undeserving is created by justice [...] *without justice no stability is left in the affairs of men, pas mu'āmalāt-i khalq rā bi 'adl paidāri namānad.* No religion which is found on laws, can do without justice. *The trustworthy scholars of today and yesterday have said: "Justice and religion are twins" muhaqqan-i awwalīn va ākhrīn gufte and ke "al-dīn va al-'adl tawāmān".*[31]

Sajida Sultana Alvi has identified this admixture of religion and justice [justice being the primary duty of the ruler, the latter being the vice-regent of God on earth] as a feature common to most 'Mirrors' texts.[32] In the quote above, Barani suggests clearly that while religion and justice are not the same, they are inextricably intertwined; elsewhere, he writes 'that religion and the state are twins' as well [*ke al-dīn va al-mulūk tawāmān*],[33] and the king is a 'wonder of Divine creation' [*va nīz pādshāh-i a'jubeye āfrīnash allāh t'aliya ast*].[34] From the retrospective position of the 'modern', if religion and justice are interconnected, religion and state are 'twins', and the king is divinely created, then the reasoning that modern categories of historical analysis usually employ make Barani vulnerable to accusations of communalism and bigotry! The possibilities of clarity in the *Fatāwā* are greatly reduced for us by the overlay of political institutions and elements, and religion. The fact that Barani otherwise sounds orthodox in his religious views makes it easier and more tempting to highlight the theological make-up

[31] Mss. fols 43b-44a; Text, p. 66; trans., p. 94; emphases mine. Chapter 5 discusses in detail Barani's use of Sultan Mahmud as an eponymous hero in the *Fatāwā*.
[32] Sajida Sultana Alvi, *Advice on the Art of Governance:* Mau'izah-i Jahangiri *of Muhammad Baqir Najm-i Sani. An Indo-Islamic Mirror for Princes,* Albany, 1989, p. 3; *Fatāwā* mss. fol. 99a; text, p. 141; trans. p. 200:'*va pādshāhi niyābat-i khudāī va khilāfat-i khudāī ast,* and kingship is the deputyship and viceregency of God'.
[33] Mss. fol. 243; text, p. 334; trans. p. 493; *Political Theory,* deleted (see p. 114).
[34] Mss. fol. 2a; Text, p. 3; trans., p. 2; *Political Theory,* deleted (see p. 1).

of his writings, but it undermines greatly the political conundrums that the text contains and seeks to redress.

A similar partiality is visible in the suggestion that Barani had a 'class' bias, a point noted time and again in light of the fact that he speaks out loudly in favour of the preservation of the privileges of the aristocrats, and his general disdain of the low-born [*razīl*]. According to Irfan Habib, 'Barani is a historian with a declared class bias; and it is, perhaps, best to deal with him frankly on his own terms.' [35] Once again, while Barani says a lot of things that would qualify him as 'class conscious', like his 'advice' against the employment of the low born ['the low-born (...) cannot accomplish any task, religious or worldly, which is approved by knowledge and reason; *bad asl* (...) *kār-i dīn-o-dunyā pasandīde ulūm-o-'aql nayāyad'*][36] such a characterisation remains partial to the appreciation of the worth of the text for modern scholars. To identify 'class consciousness' [over 'preservation of privileges'] in a pre-modern text may be tenable, but may also reorient the subjective realities and attitudes of the times in which the text was compiled.

The purpose of this section has been to highlight the major prevailing attitudes about the text. The few quotes have hopefully suggested that there are both subtle and important disjunctures in the understood wisdom of the text, seeking a complete re-examination of the text.[37] The utility of the *Fatāwā* as a text is particularly enhanced by the fact that Barani was writing towards the end of the mature period of the sultanate, having himself held a courtly position for a long time. He was thus able to deal with a number of issues and problems in the *Fatāwā* that may have been partial or complete refractions of events having occurred in the history of the Sultanate, and of which he would have knowledge or in which he may even have participated. His position as

[35] Habib, 'Barani's Theory', p. 104; also, Habib and Khan, *Political Theory*, pp. ii, 144 where he [Habib] suggests that Barani's social ideas resembled the caste system of the Hindus; and G. Khurana, 'Ziyauddin Barani: The First Indian Historian of Medieval India', *Journal of Indian History*, 50, 3, 1972, p. 762. Alvi, *Advice*, pp. 4-8 provides a good summary of the stereotypical approaches to the *Fatāwā* and Barani's other writings, she herself calling him a 'communalist' (*ibid.*, p. 5).
[36] Mss. fol. 206a; text, p. 281; trans., p. 414; *Political Theory*, p. 98, abridged. References to the inadmissibility of the low-born abound in the *Fatāwā*, there being an entire *naṣīhat* devoted to it. See mss fols 216a-222b; text, pp. 295-304; trans., pp. 436-49; *Political Theory*, pp. 97-101, abridged.
[37] Note how Irfan Habib, 'Ziya Barani', p. 19, inadvertently seals the fate of the *Fatāwā*: '...since the work of Mohammad Habib and Afsar Khan in the 1950s, [Barani's] position as a political theorist has [...] been recognised. The following pages, therefore, represent the re-visiting of explored ground; but such verification always performs a service, *even when it merely confirms what was previously known* ....'

courtier obviously disallowed him to solve the problems in his own way, but the unfortunate reprieve in which he found himself in his old age gave him the opportunity to articulate the best possible way of governing a polity informed by the contested realities of the Delhi Sultanate.[38]

The value of the *Fatāwā* as a source lies in seeing it as a dictation in the art of governance. Its goal is a perfect *dār al-Islām*, but one whose perfection is subject to the many realities of the imperfect political canvas of the polity. It should be seen as a prescription coming from a courtier and chronicler with a sharp political acumen, matured through first-hand experience of politics. The issues, questions and problems raised and addressed in the text make it a well-informed, astute articulation of the contested political identity of the Delhi Sultanate, located at the crossroads of 'religious' and 'political' Islam. It should not be seen as either a 'theory' or a 'solution' to the problems of the Delhi Sultanate; in any case, most of the events had already occurred by the time the text was written.

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There is only one known manuscript copy of the *Fatāwā* in the world, in the collections of the India Office at the British Library, London.[39] The name of the text and the author appear clearly in the manuscript; fol. 1b, line 2, says 'Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī of the well-wisher of the sultan's court Ziya-i Barani, *du'ā guy'i dargāh-i sulṭānī ziyā-i baranī*', and on the last line of the same folio 'So says Zia Barani, the well-wisher of the sultan's court after studying a number of books, *chunīn gūyad du'ā guy'i dargāh-i sulṭānī ziyā-i baranī b'ad mutaliḥ kardan kitāb-hā*' in red-coloured ink.[40]

The manuscript seems to have belonged to one Abd al-Wahhab Khan, whose name appears in a seal on the fly-leaf. An incomplete [illegible] date — '115?' — in the same

[38] Barani's personal life and how it may have affected his writings is discussed in chapter 2.
[39] Oriental and India Office Collections, Mss no. 1149.
[40] Ethé, *Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts*, p. 1377, #2563, OIOC Ms no. 1149; I am unclear how Ethé reads *du'a guy'i* as 'royal chaplain'. Also, note that he presumes the 'sultan' to be Firuz Shah Tughluq, although the text does not say so. He has listed the text under works on 'Theology and Law', presumably deriving from the literal meaning of the title *fatāwā* [sing. *fatwā*], 'legal decrees', Steingass, *Dictionary*, s.v. 'fatwā', p. 906. Mss fol. 1b, last line has the words '*kitāb-hā*' written in pencil.

seal suggests 12th century AH, and the 17th century AD.[41] The name of the person being very common, it has unfortunately been impossible to identify the person.[42]

Regrettably often, the lives of manuscripts are impossible to track. Afsar Saleem Khan mentions that this manuscript became part of the library of Tipu Sultan of Mysore at some point in time, presumably having left the possession of Wahhab. Two seals of the East India Company suggest that the Company acquired it along with other possessions of Tipu Sultan upon his defeat. In 1858, when the assets of the Company were taken over by the Crown, the manuscript passed into the possession of the India Office Library, where it has remained till date.[43]

The manuscript is faulty in many ways. The entire manuscript has marks of damp in a V-shape from the outward corners moving towards the spine, but is legible.[44] There seem to be a number of errors in transcription, suggesting either callousness on the part of the copyist or that the manuscript passed through a number of hands, though the provenance of a singular copy would suggest that the text was not copied too many times [unlike the *Tārīkh*]. Some folios are missing, and some have been left blank;[45] no explanation seems forthcoming since the text preceding and following the blank folios seem to read in continuation, suggesting perhaps that the patron of the copy may have wanted illustrations to be inserted. It was an established tradition for copyists to leave blank folios where artists would then add illustrations related to the context/subject.[46]

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[41] Khan, 'Introduction', *Fatāwā*, p. 1, says '18th century' which seems to be a typesetting error; see *idem*, 'Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī', p. 564, where it is given correctly as '17th century'.

[42] *Ibid.*, suggests that Wahhab may have been the copyist, which is less likely. There is an extra folio (249a) at the end of the manuscript which is like a prescription for illness. This would suggest a domestic setting, and possession of the manuscript by a private family. Finally, the fly-leaf gives another name for the text, *Naṣā'iḥ-i Jahāndārī* ['Advice on Ordering the World'], the hand-writing of which is different form that of the text, suggesting that it was a name given by the owner/reader of the manuscript, rather than the copyist. The alternative title appears as part of the main title, i.e., *Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī yānī Naṣā'iḥ-i Jahāndārī.* A scribe's name usually appeared at the end of the manuscript, as a proper signature [Plates 3 & 4].

[43] Khan, 'Introduction', in *Fatāwā*, p. 1; see chapter 4 where the question of 'religion' and 'politics' in the *Fatāwā* has been examined in detail. The words 'Tippu ms' are written in pencil on the front endpaper; the company seal 'E.I. Comp. Library' appears on the front endpaper, fol. 249b and the verso of fol. 249a. The first IOL seal gives the date 07 November 1951. A fourth, completely illegible seal appears on the top left-hand corner of the flyleaf, and is perhaps that of another owner since the shape of the seal is different from that of Wahhab.

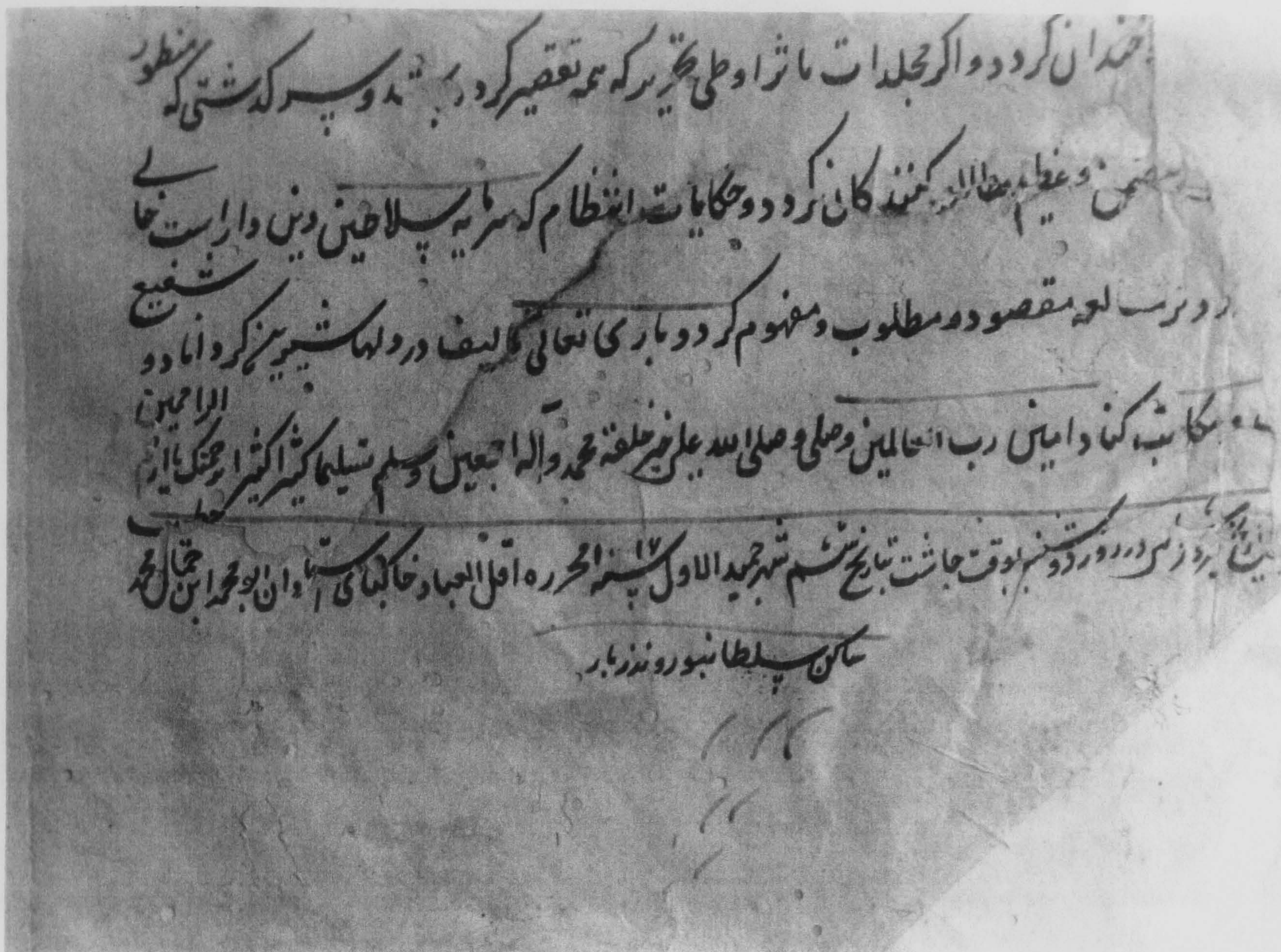
[44] Khan, *ibid.* says they are damaged 'by worms'!

[45] Mss fols 115a, 172b, 173a, part of 191a-b.

[46] Bernard O'Kane, *Early Persian Painting:* Kalīla wa Dimnā *Manuscripts of the Late Fourteenth Century*, London, 2003, 'Introduction'.

Plate 3: Example 1 of Standard Scribal Signature

Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī, first recension, unpublished manuscript, Raza Library, Ms. no. 2053, detail of fol. 343.
[Used by Permission]



Details in the last two lines include [in order] name of text, day, date and year of completion of copy, scribe's name and affiliation, as follows:
Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī dar rūze du-shāmbe ba waqt-i chāsht ba tārīkh-i shishum shahr-i Juma'da al-Awwal san 1017 [AH] muḥarrah aqall al-abd va khāq-i pāi ustādān Abu Muḥammad ibn Jamāl Muḥammad khatīb/ sakin sulṭānpur va (??) narzbād

Plate 4: Example 2 of Standard Scribal Signature

***Saḥīfā-i Na'at-i Moḥammadī*, unpublished manuscript,**
Raza Library, Mss No. 1895, fol. 232.
[Used by Permission]



Details on the last line includes [in order] name of scribe and affiliation only, as follows:
Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad Akbarābādī

The text is copied by one person since the handwriting is identical throughout the entirety of it. As with all copies, the varying thickness and thinness of the pen suggests that it was copied over a period of time by a professional scribe. The size of the manuscript is 9½ by 5⅝ inches, and it is written in clear *nast'aliq* script.

It has been studied in depth only once earlier, by Afsar Afzal ud-Din, who also edited and published the entire manuscript.

*

In its attempt to textually analyse a single text, this dissertation sees the *Fatāwā* in and as an entirety. It therefore remains strictly with the text, with no pretence to comparisons with other texts either by Barani himself or by others. As the various sections and chapters will show, this has allowed the text to be opened and read from multiple points of entry. While the dependence on just one text is a great limitation, it has also made possible the use of the same evidence to make more than one point, often supporting separate arguments.

The text is written as 'advice, *naṣīhat*s', which Khan has arranged into 24 separate advice in her published edition.[47] The nature of the *Fatāwā* being excessively repetitive with different examples to support the same argument[s], and the interconnectedness of the text in terms of ideas and arguments, has meant that this dissertation is by definition inexhaustive of possible examples. Also, the text contains examples — mostly in the form of illustrative historical anecdotes — which are presented as 'opposites', one supporting the idea expressed and one acting as a warning to the readers about what they should expect otherwise. Where applicable, the examples have almost always been taken from the former category to magnify the meanings of the ideas being examined. The rhythm of this dissertation is determined to a fair extent by that of the *Fatāwā* itself. For the purposes of clarity and faithfulness to the text, the centrality of the text has been retained throughout, with a constant repositioning of the analytic perspective.

[47] There is a discrepancy between Khan's dissertation and the published edition from Advice 8 onwards. This has occurred because of a discrepancy in the way the manuscript is written, but I do not dwell upon it at length here because the content of the text remains the same. Discrepancies between the two have been noted in the relevant footnotes.

In practical terms, this has meant, for instance that one quote may be used for more than one 'argument'.

The primary concerns of this dissertation have been two separate but interconnected questions; put simply, they are 'context' and 'content'. The context has been studied at two levels: the context of the author, and the context of the *genre* of the text. Chapter 2 attempts to create the context for the author, Ziya Barani, in the historical-political setting of the Delhi Sultanate, and of his family. The history of the Delhi Sultanate is organised around changing notions of service and loyalty, questioning some received historiographical presumptions and arranging the history of the period around new nodal points. As the chapter will suggest, these provide a significant introduction to the *Fatāwā*, reflected in part in the middle section of the chapter which highlights some quotes from the text which reflect the variant ideas of service and loyalty in the Delhi Sultanate; some of this will tie up with ideas examined in chapters 4 and 5. The quotes are disparate by intention so as to not create a 'narrative' about service and loyalty, since that is not the tone of the *Fatāwā*.

Chapter 3 studies the context of the *genre* of 'Mirrors' texts, attempting to provide a fuzzy 'history of ideas' for the *Fatāwā*. The uniqueness of this text is not just because it is the first, properly organised 'Mirrors' text to study the Islamic history of the subcontinent, but also because its predecessors may be sought both in the subcontinent and in the wider world. Thus [and deriving in method from chapter 2], the first section traces the genesis of this *genre* in the context of political developments in the world of Islam outside the subcontinent, and stops at the court of Mahmud of Ghazni where Firdausi presented his all-time great Book of Kings, the *Shahnāmā*. The second section is more eclectic, located in the subcontinent itself. It deals with the *Arthaśāstra* and the *Pañcatantra*, two examples of 'policy' [*nītī*] texts; the reason for choosing only these two from a vast corpus is that both texts were in some ways embroiled in academic debates regarding the development of similar literature in the Islamic world discussed in the preceding section. This is followed by a discussion of two Islamic sources, the *Chāchnāmā* and the *Ādāb al-Ḥarb*, drawing parallels with either the *genre* or the ideas of the *Fatāwā*. In terms of ideas, the chapter tries to highlight notions of justice, kingship and religion in pre-Islamic, Islamic and non-Islamic contexts.

Having thus outlined a background both for the author and the text, chapters 4, 5 and 6 focus strictly on the *Fatāwā*, examining its contents from different positions. Determined by the nature of the information available in the text, they are of varying length. Chapter 4 focuses on the question of religion and politics in the text, organised around the office and performance of kingship. Since the entire text deals with precisely this question, it was essential to choose some over others, but the chapter tries to be as representative as possible of the contestations inherent in the text. This has meant a certain repetitiveness [essential to any study dependent on a single source for information], but has also allowed to flesh out the composition of the text satisfactorily, at the cost of being slightly tedious. The chapter is divided in two parts, focussing on the religious and political duties of the ruler. Its purpose is to highlight the agonised accommodation of the contradictory demands of these two performative roles.

Chapter 5 builds on the previous chapter, but focuses on one prominent presence [Mahmud of Ghazni] and one prominent absence [the possibility of women rulers] in the text. The section on Mahmud is split further into a number of smaller sections which deal with the various ways in which Barani has used Mahmud in the text, through omissions and eulogies, carefully tapping the historical and literary-mythical image of the 'hero'. The very brief section on Raziyya draws no information from the *Fatāwā*; rather, it tries to highlight a possible reason why despite the rare reality of the Delhi Sultanate having had a woman ruler in the world of political Islam, Barani chooses to ignore it completely. Addressing this absence seemed necessary to fulfil the need to examine as many possible aspects of the text.

Chapter 6 comprises two sections: the first focuses on the capital city, and the second on the subject-citizenry, as discussed in the *Fatāwā*. These two seemingly unconnected components are included because of the specific and important information they provide about Barani's ideal polity. Some of the details are particularly interesting in light of the freshness of his ideas, such as his advice warning the sultan that in certain situations it is legitimate for people to overthrow their yoke of obedience to the sultan. It is such, and similar, occasional remarks made by Barani about the city and the peoples which provide a freshness of sensibility about the text from yet another point of

entry. They have been clubbed together as the two 'territories' for the performance of kingship, one geographical and the other elemental.

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Barani was never a poet; yet in his Epilogue appears a couplet indicating the investment of an old man in the writing of one of seven texts in as many years:

Rīsān kardey am tan-o-jān rā
Tā bar-āvarde āb-i hayvān rā

I had to twist my body and soul into ropes,
Before I could come to the edge of life.[48]

The study of a text born from such effort is never complete, nor its possibilities ever totally exhausted; this dissertation is an exploratory exercise into one *jahān*.

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[48] Mss. fol. 246b; text, p. 339; trans., p. 502. A slightly different translation appears in Habib and Khan, *Political Theory*, p. 116.

2

THE DELHI SULTANATE: HISTORY AND HIS STORY

The exercise of this dissertation being limited to the analysis of a single text, it will attempt to understand the contents of the *Fatāwā* in as many ways as possible. A lot of this will be dependent on, as this chapter contends, the political and material culture that surrounds the writing of the text. Towards that end, the three sections of this chapter attempt to outline a relevant context for the text, relevance being sustained through quotes from the text in order to amplify the ways in which the surrounding cultures — political and other — are reflected in and inform the text itself.[1]

The first section revisits the political chronology of the Delhi Sultanate, but focuses on the shifting strains of service and loyalty within the court [and in the larger realm]. Citations from the *Fatāwā* [in section 2] tie up with broader political developments of the times to enable a picture of the changing expectations and performance of service and loyalty at work for the sultan and the court. Part of this exercise will be to demonstrate precisely this fracture — between sultan and court — as two correlated arenas of service, occasionally leading to political instability which was the direct outcome of patterned ideas about service and loyalty, and the changes to the system.

Section 3 focuses on the life of the author, Ziya al-Din Barani. His personal fortunes had altered dramatically, particularly at the time of the writing of the *Fatāwā*, hints of which appear occasionally in the text,[2] making it more useful to consider his background, and the information available about it from him. The selective nature of information made available by him, coupled with other details of his family and background gleaned from other sources allows us to understand better the nature of the advice in the text. Finally, an attempt to apprehend the nature of education that a theologian like him would have received at that time will help us to appreciate better

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[1] The nature of the sources, and the trends in historiography has meant that the 'political' is the most dominant motif in academic writings; the nature of the *Fatāwā* being completely political, it seemed logical to retain that prominence though no doubt other equally meaningful histories may also be written.
[2] For instance, mss fol. 246b; text, p. 340; trans., p. 502: 'Help me, people of God; may God help you also! I am quite (helpless) and impotent, (ruined) and sinful.'

the academic, literary and intellectual background of the text itself. This will lead us to chapter 3, where a similar background for the *genre* of 'Mirrors' texts is outlined.

Loyalty as Service

The history of the Delhi Sultanate has been researched for long, and its dynamics been explained from various angles. Apart from the standard histories that have focused on political developments [the social and the economic bearing thereof], the recent renewed interest in the study of this period has meant the examination of the sultanate from newer perspectives. The following selection bears the preferences of the broad interests of this dissertation: first, those that have been written against the background of the 'rewriting of history' sponsored by right-wing political groups in the subcontinent in the 1990s. Two studies that stand out most prominently are K.S. Lal's *Theory and Practice of Muslim State in India*, and Sita Ram Goel's *Hindu Temples: What Happened to Them.*[3] Second, Peter Jackson's *The Delhi Sultanate* is a straightforward politico-military narrative of the expansion of the political rule of the Delhi Sultanate across the subcontinent, unmatched in its rigour and command of sources.[4] Third are those writings that have challenged or added to existing historiography by approaching the subject from alternative points of entry, outlining new perspectives on the period: B.D. Chattopadhyaya's *Representing the Other* raises the question of representing 'otherness' through a study of various textual materials in Sanskrit ranging from the 8-14th centuries; André Wink's multi-volume *Al-Hind* studies the spread of Islamic presence from the Meditteranean Sea to the Indian Ocean starting in the 7th century, as an expanding 'frontier' that is constantly interacting with new socio-political cultures; and Sunil Kumar's unpublished doctoral dissertation on the emergence of the Delhi Sultanate outlines, amongst other things, the shifting bases of legitimisation of rulers in the Delhi Sultanate in the first century of their rule, moving as they did from using theologians [*ulamā*] to *sūfī* saints to consolidate their political

3 K.S. Lal, *Theory and Practice of Muslim State in India*, New Delhi, 1999; Sita Ram Goel, *Hindu Temples: What Happened to Them*, 2 vols, New Delhi, 1990-91; as a reply to the latter, see Richard M. Eaton, 'Temple Desecration and Indo-Muslim States', in D. Gilmartin and B. B. Lawrence, eds, *Beyond Turk and Hindu: Rethinking Religious Identities in Islamicate South Asia*, Gainesville, 2000, pp. 246-81. See also 'Rewriting History: A Symposium on Ways of Representing our Shared Past', *Seminar*, No. 522, February 2002.

4 Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History*, Cambridge, 1999; *EI2*, s.v. 'Diḥlī, Sultanate of', Vol. 2, pp. 266-74.

authority.[5] Finally, David Gilmartin and Bruce Lawrence's *Beyond Turk and Hindu*, and Sushil Mittal's *Surprising Bedfellows* draw attention to the syncretic nature of 'Islamicate' identity in the subcontinent as Islamic and non-Islamic communities came in contact with one another, making it difficult to sustain assertions of uncontaminated, separate and clearly defined religious identities.[6]

This section does not propose to make any further contribution to the historical narrative of the Delhi Sultanate; however, on the basis of available information it revisits the political history of the sultanate, highlighting one particular hitherto sidelined aspect, that of loyalty and service to the crown as an organising theme in the art of governance for the Delhi sultans.[7] Its purpose is to underline subtle and dramatic changes that occurred in the political workings of the sultanate, which when seen over a long term, had far-reaching effects. Section 2 contains unconnected and disparate quotes on service and loyalty from the *Fatāwā*; the examples are meant to highlight its different usages in the text, since Barani does not provide any composite opinion on the matter anywhere in the text. This will provide a background to the text, and allow us to amplify certain motifs which re-appear later in this dissertation as part of the analysis of the text. It will also highlight some ahistorical presumptions about the period that remain unquestioned in modern academia.

With the arrival of the Arabs in the region of Sind in the 8th century, the 'Islamic/medieval' period of Indian history-writing gains its initial bearings, seeing it as the seedbed of what was to come more than 4 centuries later by way of political rule.

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[5] B.D. Chattopadhyaya, *Representing the Other: Sanskrit Sources and the Muslims*, New Delhi, 1998; André Wink, *Al-Hind: The Making of the Indo-Islamic World*, 3 vols, Leiden, 1990, 1997, 2004; Sunil Kumar, 'The Emergence of the Delhi Sultanate, 588-685/1192-1286', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, Duke University, 1992.

[6] Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, Chicago, 1974, Vol. 1, pp. 57-60, coined the neologism 'Islamicate' to refer to the broad expanse of Africa and Asia that was influenced by political Islam but not restricted to the practice of Islam as a religion. Gilmartin and Lawrence, eds, *Beyond Turk and Hindu*; Sushil Mittal, ed., *Surprising Bedfellows: Hindus and Muslims in Medieval and Early Modern India*, Lanham, 2003. See also R. Morton Smith, 'Meeting of Opposites: Islam and Hinduism', in R.M. Savory and D.A. Agius, eds, *Logos Islamikos: Studia Islamica in Honorem Georgii Michaelis Wickens*, Toronto, 1984, pp. 307-23, and the interesting Annemarie Schimmel, 'Turk and Hindu: A Poetical Image and its Application to Historical Fact', in Speros Vryonis, ed., *Islam and Cultural Change in the Middle Ages*, Wiesbaden, 1975, pp. 107-26.

[7] This section [and chapter] being based largely on secondary readings, it will not always give specific citations for the broader narrative. Most of the information is culled from general textbooks as cited, and the political narrative in this section is intentionally skewed to favour the interests stated above.

But this Arab — and later Islamic —presence was geographically limited,[8] and their activities never threatened to disrupt the course of politics in the subcontinent in any substantial way. Arab control of Sindh was significant but with limited political governance and revenue collection, Sindh being more an outpost rather than a gateway. Over the 19th and 20th centuries, however, all activities identified with the appearance of Islam in the subcontinent in this period — trade, revenue collection, loot and political rule — were sublimated by historians in the larger cause of the political domination of a group of Turko-Afghan warriors from the 11th century onwards. This ahistorical connectivity is a prominent academic thought, especially in making the connections between the Arab 'conquest' of Sindh [8th century] and the Ghaznavid and Ghurid attacks [10th century onwards].[9] The paucity of information about the period disallows any sustained arguments about service loyalty; this is redoubled due to the absence of sufficient information about the 'court' in Sindh, as also the limited political and territorial ambitions of the Arabs at the time.[10]

The 17 raids of Mahmud of Ghazni into the subcontinent never intended to set up a systematised structure of political governance, but being a warrior-ruler himself, he carried with him the command of service that is easily identified with expanding political Islam at the time. There is consensus about the fact that he had a massive army, and of his famous attack on the temple of Somnath in Gujarat, for our interests. Both slaves and mercenaries may have played an important role in his army, but this provides no indication of service and loyalty in the Delhi Sultanate.[11] That is reserved for Muizz al-Din of Ghur, whose slave Qutb al-Din Aybak was appointed the first governor in the subcontinent with the intent of setting up a political base. Strictly, this

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[8] There is general consensus regarding the presence of Arab traders in the coastal areas where they were 'familiar for centuries' before their arrival in Sindh. See A.B.M. Habibullah, *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, Allahabad, rpt 1992, p. 1; also, S. Nadvi, 'Muslim Colonies in India before the Muslim Conquest', *Islamic Culture,* 10, 1, 1935, pp. 144-66; I. H. Siddiqui, 'Introduction', in *idem*, ed., *Medieval India: Essays in Intellectual Thought and Culture*, Vol. 1, Delhi, 2003, pp. 9-15; Vasudha Narayanan, 'Religious Vocabulary and Religious Identity: A Study of the Tamil *Cirappuranam*', in Gilmartin and Lawrence, eds, *Beyond Turk and Hindu*, pp. 74-97; and M. Hamidulla, 'Ancient India from Arabic Sources', *PIHC*, 5th session, 1941, pp. 246-49.

[9] See, for instance, A. L. Srivastava, *The Sultanate of Delhi [711-1526 AD] Including the Arab Conquest of Sind, Hindu Rule in Afghanistan and Causes of the Defeat of Hindus in Early Medieval Age*, Agra, rpt 1990.

[10] The court was obviously the most prominent arena of service, and then there was the larger governed realm which was also absent in this case. The most prominent and interesting textual source for the period is the *Chāchnāma*, written by one Badr Chach. It is discussed in chapter 3.

[11] Mahmud's attacks on Somnath are discussed in chapter 5.

is seen as marking the beginning of the Delhi Sultanate, and Muizz al-Din's death [1206 AD] 'first propelled Muslim India on its own separate path'.[12]

Aybak's reign, while short-lived, was important for two reasons; the shift of the centre of political activity from Lahore to the more centrally located Delhi, suggesting the increasing prominence of their political power from the western Punjab to a broader canvas covering northern India. And second, it laid the political foundations of the sultanate; hereafter, the story would be one of possession of the seat of power in Delhi, and the various attempts made by aspiring individuals to expanding and establishing control over a larger political realm. Importantly, his status remained one of governor and not sultan, for he had not been manumitted from his slavehood by his master. This last point holds a number of relevances for the interests of this section: that worthy slaves occupied responsible, semi-autonomous control over political outposts; that trust and loyalty of the slaves were indispensable for the ruler in the appanaging of political control; that the ruler as master was the only person responsible who could free a slave from his servitude, and if he died without doing so then the slave could never become a sultan, the latter status being dependent on caliphal recognition of a free-born/freed person.

All these came to the fore more prominently when Aybak's slave and son-in-law Shams al-Din Iltutmish ascended the throne. His reign, from AD 1210/11-36, was the period when the principality of Delhi 'emerged as a paramount sultanate in north India' from what had been a 'precarious hold over some urban centres' by the Shansabanid rulers of Ghur.[13] A complex set of activities engendered multiple forms of political cohesion, enabling the emergence of a heterogeneously-knit, contested political dispensation. Importantly, both its cohesion and contestation were in large measure due to the peculiarities of the slave system upon which it rested and that was the bulwark of the political structure. Nonetheless, Iltutmish was able to give considerable stability to the infant sultanate, and also gain caliphal recognition [AD 1229] shortly before his death. Caliphal recognition meant that it was now officially a 'sultanate' from a

[12] Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate*, p. 3; as a general text, A. K. Srivastava, *The Life and Times of Kutb-ud-din Aibak*, Gorakhpur, 1972.
[13] Kumar, 'Emergence', p. v.

'governorship', headed by a sultan; it also made Delhi visible on the map of political Islam as a part of the *dār al-Islām*, giving it a clearer political identity.

This rapid political transformation, Kumar has argued, was due in large measure to the associative relationships that the sultan was able to forge with various groups — initially the *ulamā* [and *sūfīs* later on] — buoyed by his own military might. This in turn was complemented by an expansion of its agrarian base and simultaneous access to the countryside, giving the sultanate a much-needed economic backbone.[14]

But Iltutmish's reign, and especially the period immediately following his death are marked by violent courtly intrigue. Rulers were pawns in the hands of powerful notables, the latter all elite slaves [*bandagān-i-khāṣṣ*] who had put in many years of service to their master at court. To understand the many push-pull factors that marked the politics of this period, it is important to draw attention to certain particular features of military slavery in Islam as it came to be in the Delhi Sultanate. Interweaving it with the political developments will amplify the important, fundamental notions of service and loyalty that rendered dynamism to the politics of the period.

Iltutmish, as mentioned earlier, was a slave of Qutb al-Din Aybak; he was also part of the *bandagān-i-khāṣṣ*. While he was more special because he was also his son-in-law, this did not make him a legitimate claimant to the seat of power in Delhi upon Aybak's death. The example of Baha al-Din Tughril — another senior slave of Aybak — illustrates this contestation well, namely, that the *bandagān-i-khāṣṣ* considered themselves equal and were unaccepting of any hierarchy amongst them. Tughril had independent charge of Bayana [26° 55N, 77° 18E] under Aybak; upon his death, as Iltutmish ascended in Delhi, Tughril declared himself the ruler of Bayana, with his capital at Sultankot. New buildings were built using plundered temple materials, coins were struck and he had the *khutbā* read in his name to declare his leadership of the community. In real and symbolic terms, Sultankot was no less than Delhi. In fact, 'as with political authority, there were many centres of Muslim civilization in north India' at this time, 'each protected and patronised by an amir aware of his responsibilities to

[14] Kumar, 'Emergence', pp. 76-164.

the faithful'.[15] There was no doubt, then, that Delhi was not the centre of power of a sultanate at this time; it was one of many contenders aiming for political paramountcy.[16] The contemporary chronicler Juzjani gives us reasons for the why and how of this contestation; he quotes a conversation between Muizz al-Dīn and 'a favourite of the court, *muqarrabān-i hazrat-i saltanat*' where, in reply to a query from the favourite about the absence of any heirs, the sultan is said to have replied that while

other sultans have one or two sons, I have many thousand sons, *marā chandīn hazār farzand ast*, i.e., my Turkish slaves, *yānī bandagān-i Turk*, and they will be the heirs to my dominions, *ke mamālik-i man mīrās-i īshān khwāhad būd*, and after my death they will preserve my name in the Friday sermons read in my dominions.[17]

It would seem, then, that Tughril was well within his rights to assert independent control of Bayana, and to contest Iltutmish's claims to paramountcy.[18]

A host of factors led to this scenario, central to which were ideas of loyalty and service. The military slave system was well underway in political Islam from earlier times, and slaves formed the core of many imperial armies including that of Mahmud of Ghazni.[19] In the subcontinent, it arrived in a fully mature form, but took on a role far more complicated and decisive, as slaves became notables at court and commanded most of the important positions and offices across the governed realm. This was in part because of the numerical minority of Muslims in the subcontinent at the time which increased the tendency of the sultan to depend on a small coterie of faithful slaves [numbering between 50-75],[20] the elite status of the *bandagān-i-khāṣṣ* ensuring their loyalty and

[15] Kumar, 'Emergence', pp. 57-58; see also Mehrdad and Natalie Shokoohy, 'The Architecture of Baha al-Din Tughrul in the Region of Bayana, Rajasthan', *Muqarnas*, 4, 1987, pp. 114-32.
[16] Other prominent claimants include Qabacha [in Uchch] and Yilduz [in Lahore which (interestingly) he had wrested from Qabacha]; see Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate*, pp. 26-32.
[17] Juzjani, *Tabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī*, ed. A.H. Habibi, 2 vols, Kabul, 1963-64 [hereafter *Tabaqāt*], Vol. 1, pp. 410-11; Kumar, 'Emergence', p. 61.
[18] It may be mentioned over here that a similar situation did not arise in the time of Qutb al-Din Aybak perhaps because he was nominated as governor by his master, and also that he was the only *bandagān-i khāṣṣ* who played an important role in extending Ghurid political control in the subcontinent. Juzjani, *Tabaqāt*, Vol. 1, p. 316, and Kumar, 'Emergence', pp. 36-38, give a number of reasons for Aybak's meteoric rise in the court of Muizz al-Din of Ghur.
[19] On the institution of military slavery, see Daniel Pipes, *Slave Soldiers in Islam: The Genesis of a Military Slave System*, New Haven, 1981; Patricia Crone, *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity*, Cambridge, 1990; and Sussan Babaie *et al.*, *Slaves of the Shah: New Elites of Safavid Iran*, London, 2004.
[20] Kumar, 'Emergence', p. 32.

service to the rulers. There were indeed some military commanders [*maliks*] who, in distant areas, rebelled against the sultan; Iltutmish in fact spent a fair part of his rule quelling such uprisings. Yet, it was a nascent sultanate where authority and control was nebulous, and political stability depended greatly upon the trusted service of loyal supporters despite the occasional instability caused by rebellions.[21]

The basis of this trust were the long years of [martial] education, *ṭarbiyat* and upbringing, *parwarish* which these slaves shared with the ruler, and with one another. Slaves who went on to become *khāṣṣ* were often bought at a young age, and sometimes grew up with the sultan in the royal household. They were trained rigorously for many years, as they made their way up the slave ladder from being an ordinary page to an elite slave. These long years of fosterage tied them in eternal bonds of loyalty, trust and service to their master, abetted further by their own peculiar status of being 'natally alienated and socially dead', owned and made free solely by their master.[22] While this lent great strength to the sultan's army of supporters, the structure itself was riven with contradictions.

In brief [and as attested by incidents following Aybak's and Iltutmish's death], this emotional and social — albeit hierarchical — bonding created a political edifice which functioned brilliantly *only* as long as the master/sultan was alive. All the trusted, elite slaves — confirmed in their loyalty to the master — became beneficiaries of powerful military and administrative positions allocated by the master/sultan, lending both strength and cohesion to the political structure; answerable to the same master, the slaves *en bloc* defended the same political threshold, consolidating the feeble political hold of the sultanate in the larger political realm. But this practice of service and loyalty was limited only to the one master with whom they shared ties of fosterage, and translated neither to his heirs/successors, and certainly not to any other elite slave even

[21] See S.B.P. Nigam, *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi: A.D. 1206-1398*, Delhi, 1968; Gavin R.G. Hambly, 'Who were the *Chihilgānī*, the Forty Slaves of Sultan Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish of Delhi?', *Iran*, 10, 1972, pp. 57-62; Peter Jackson, 'The *Mamlūk* Institution in Early Muslim India', *JRAS*, 2 , 1990, pp. 340-58; Irfan Habib, 'The Formation of the Sultanate Ruling Class in the Thirteenth Century', in *idem*, ed., *Medieval India 1*, Delhi, 1994, pp. 1-21; and for an important reconsideration of all the above, Sunil Kumar, 'When Slaves were Nobles: The Shamsi *Bandagān* in the Delhi Sultanate', *Studies in History*, n.s., 10, 1, 1994, pp. 23-52.

[22] Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*, Cambridge, Mass., 1982, pp. 1-14 defines the status of a slave in these words. On the making of the loyal slave in the Delhi Sultanate, see Kumar, 'Emergence', pp. 38-45.

if they — like Iltutmish — were married into the royal family. If extreme loyalty marked their service to the master, amongst themselves none was any less equal than the other. Thus, the death of the master/sultan unleashed political chaos as each of them pursued their individual ambitions. As a deracinated political elite, this competent body of political officers and servers who had often grown roots in their areas of command dissolved into individual or groups of political power-lords.

Thus, the stability of the political structure was determined to a great extent by notions of service and loyalty whose basis lay in the complex network of royal slave supporters. It was person-based, and its elitism [and closeness with the person of the ruler] was directly related to the number of years spent in imperial fosterage. Their service to the master was unfailing; yet, personal political realities overtook and dictated their interests once the master died. What they shared was the same master and his commands, but not his political dreams and ambitions. And the system was such that loyalty bred through the many years of intimate servitude to the master was a non-transferable element in the event of succession.

In the period following Aybak's death, his elite slaves — Tughril, Yilduz, Qabacha — asserted their individual ambitions politically; and in the macabre period following the death of Iltutmish, the 'famous forty', *chihilganī*, became king-makers at court, controlling the destiny of all of Iltutmish's successor-children. In the latter case, this was a particularly dangerous and violent scenario when, in the space of 7 years, three of Iltutmish's children were made rulers, and then summarily killed by the slave notables. Their power had reached such an extreme that they were able to appoint and dispose of rulers according to their own will and interests, completely inverting the subordinate position they had held under their own master. This mercenary attitude shows the complete detachment of loyalty from the master's children.

The *chihilganī* were able to emerge as a powerful bloc within the court of Delhi for another very important reason; they were from the same ethnic Turk stock. Ethnic homogeneity was an important factor in the creation of interest solidarity in a foreign land. After Iltutmish's death, they welded together to guard their own interests; their equal status meant that none of them tried to become king themselves, but appointed the erstwhile master's children as rulers one after the other in an attempt to guarantee

their own privileges more permanently. They wielded absolute power, and the rulers were mere puppets in their hands. While neither loyalty nor service determined their attachments to these successor rulers, their own internal rivalry discouraged the emergence of any one of them as the single ruler. Their ethnic homogeneity engendered a certain cohesiveness of trust and interest, but this too was not to last very long. When these notables appointed Raziyya as the first woman ruler of the sultanate, little did they realise that she would bring forth changes in the composition of slave-powered nobility in a manner that would fundamentally alter this courtly phenomenon.

Raziyya's accession was in itself somewhat disputed. Iltutmish's most capable [and eldest] son Nasir al-Din predeceased him in a military campaign in AD 1229.[23] The principle of primogeniture no longer being applicable, there are conflicting reports about who his next chosen successor was to be: while some contend that he preferred his daughter Raziyya [who was also the eldest child], others believe that it was his son Rukn al-Din.[24] Whatever may have been the dying sultan's wish, his Turkish nobles — now omnipotent at court — appointed Rukn al-Din on the throne, but he was there for only a few months before being killed by them. Raziyya was next, and she remained on the throne for more than 4 years, before being killed by 'Hindus' on the outskirts of Delhi in AD 1236.[25] [Map 2; Plates 5 and 6]

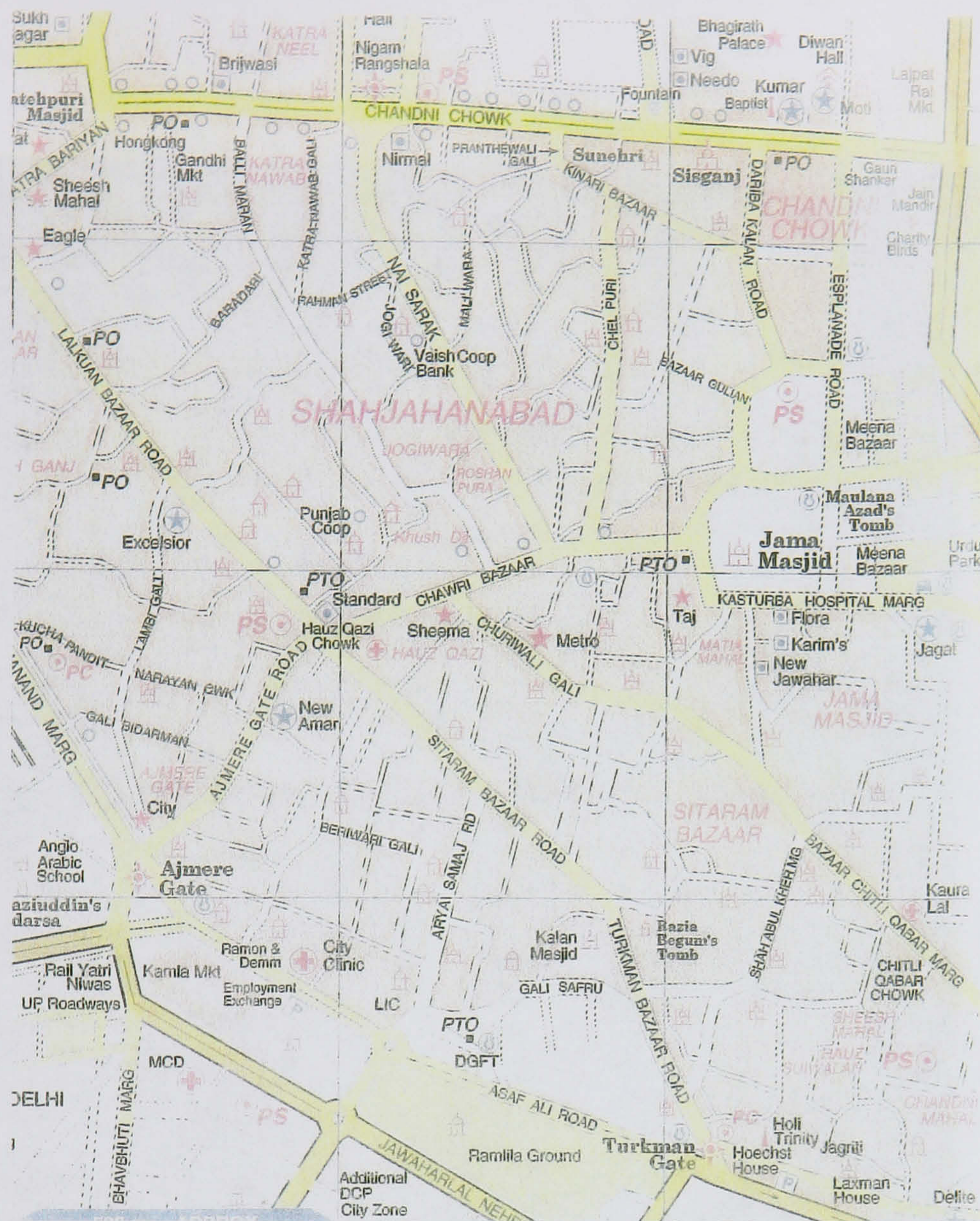
For our purposes, Raziyya's reign is very important because she dramatically altered the nature of the slave bulwark in the politics of the sultanate. First, and most importantly, Raziyya introduced a new ethnicity amongst slaves at the court, black [*habshī*] slaves. The significance of this action was manifold. On the surface, she was able to alter the ethnic composition [and thus cohesion] of the powerful Turkic notables who were completely beyond her control since they did not owe any loyalty or allegiance to her. The *habshī*s — one of whom named Jamal al-Din Yaqut was particularly prominent, according to Juzjani[26] — along with other new slaves emerged

23 Iltutmish built a mausoleum for this son, which is one of the first examples of Islamic funerary architecture in the subcontinent; see S.A.A. Naqvi, 'Sultan Ghari', *Ancient India*, 3, 1947, pp. 4-10.
24 Juzjani, *Tabaqāt*, Vol. 1, p. 456; Peter Jackson, 'Sultan Radiyya bint Iltutmish', in Gavin R.G. Hambly, ed., *Women in the Medieval Islamic World: Power, Patronage and Piety*, Hampshire, 1998, p. 193, *n*. 15 for Raziyya being the initial chosen successor of Iltutmish; I use 'Raziyya' after her name as it appears in the coin in Plate 9.
25 Juzjani, *Tabaqāt*, Vol. 1, p. 462 for her death.
26 *Ibid.*, p. 460.

Map 2

Map of modern Old Delhi showing 'Razia Begum's Tomb' [marked with ◄]. Standard maps rarely mark this hard-to-find spot.

[From *Eicher City Guide: Delhi*, New Delhi, 1998, detail of Map 9.]



◄

Plate 5

Grave of Raziyya and ?? [Altuniah]

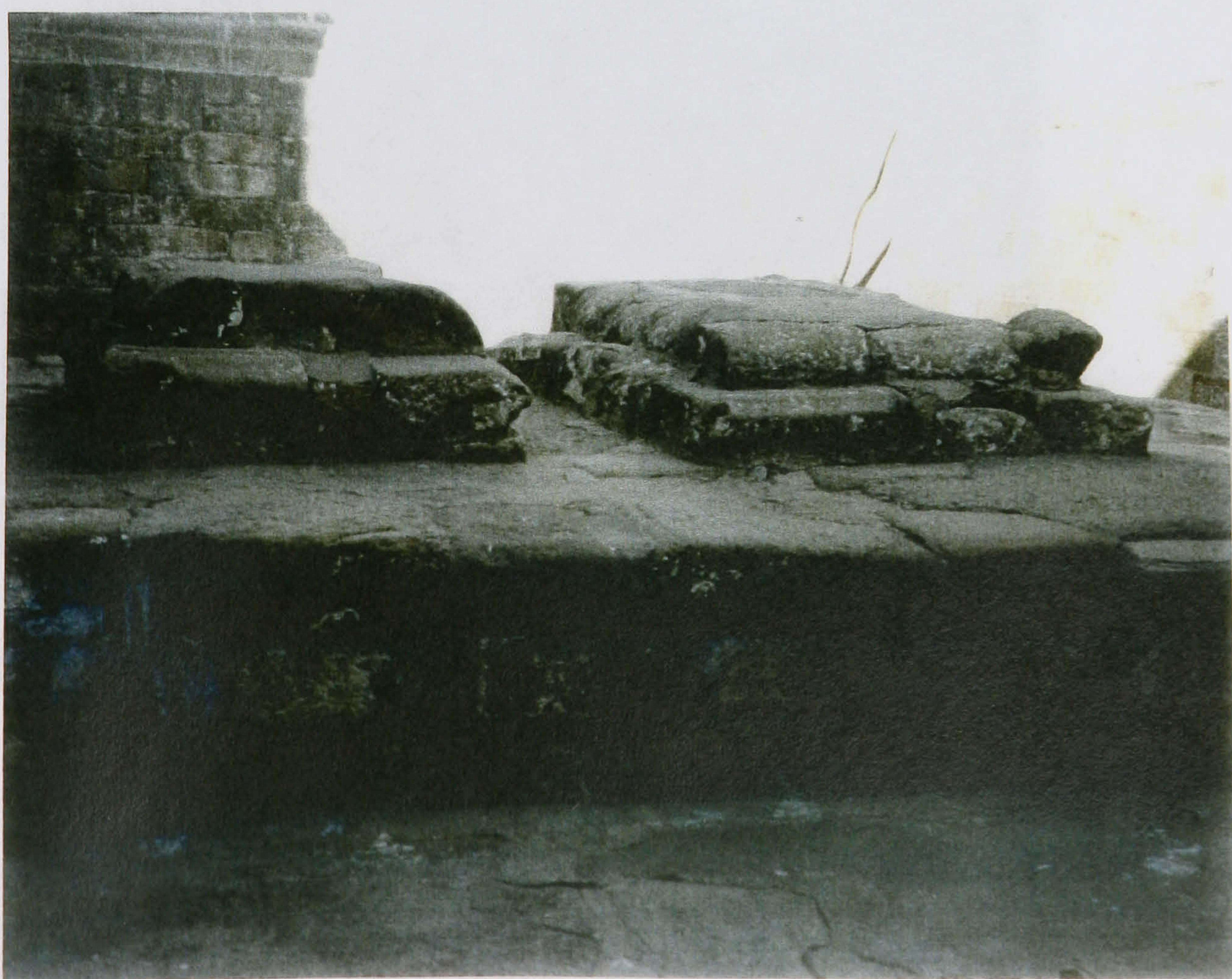
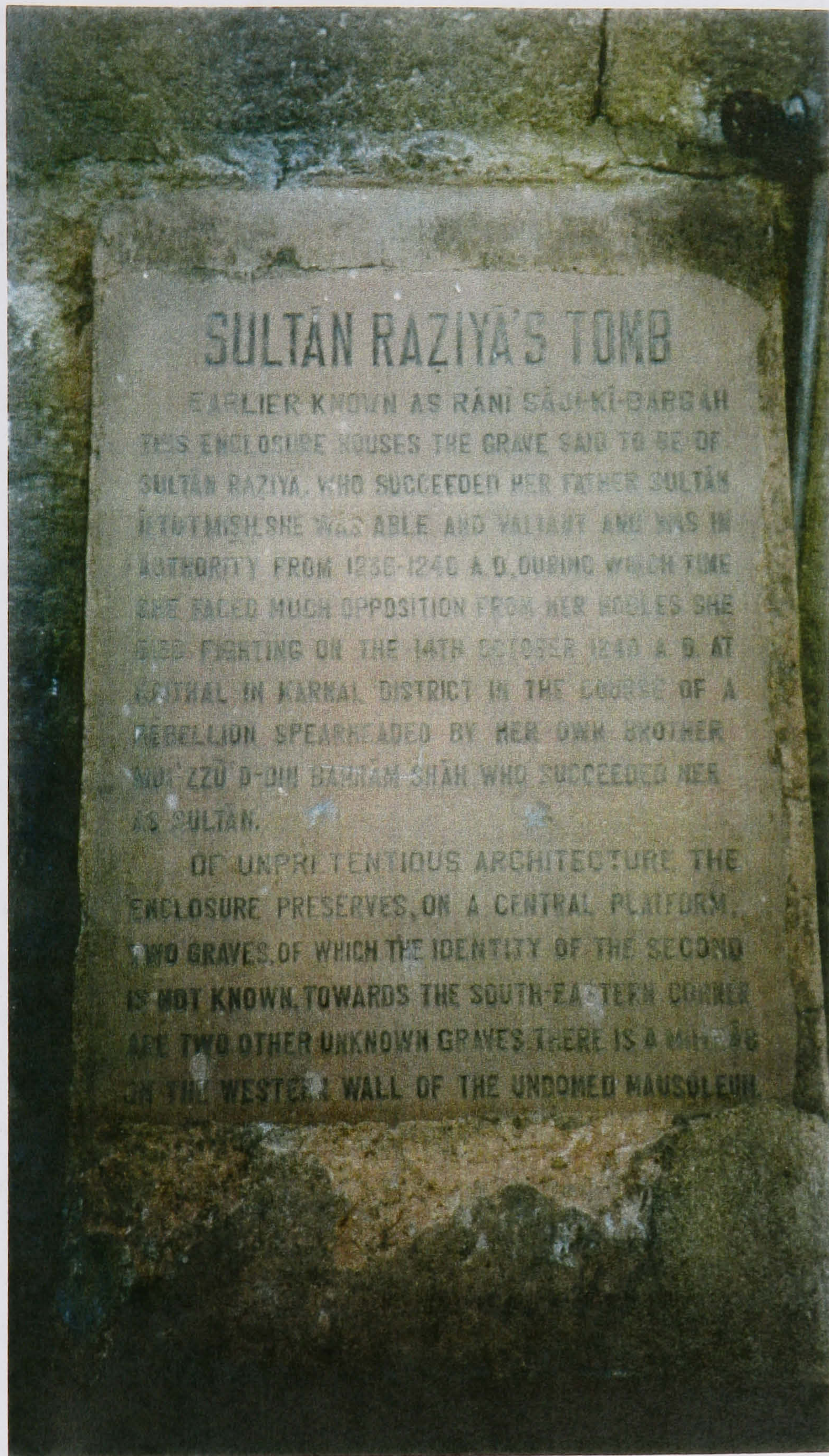


Plate 6

Plaque of Archaeological Survey of India at the entrance to Raziyya's grave. It used to be known locally as 'Rani Saji ki Dargah'.



as a counter power bloc challenging the privileged status of the Turkish coterie, owing complete loyalty to Raziyya since she was their master. She rewarded them with high and trusted posts, and was therefore able to build a support base within the court who would guard and promote her interests.

What was interesting was that Raziyya did not alter the basic norms of the system, namely slaves' loyalty to the master, and the privilege of high offices for loyal supporters. But she fundamentally altered the working mechanisms of the system. With the arrival of new slaves loyal and faithful *only* to her, Raziyya was able to upturn the most important criteria for the making of the 'loyal' slave, namely, that it was not essential to spend many years building bonds of fosterage with the ruler to become privileged at court [or khāṣṣ]; nor was it the litmus test of loyalty towards the crown.[27] Earlier, it was sufficient for a slave-notable to acquire office and serve the master and remain unconcerned about any opposition at court; now, the picture changed totally [for both the old Turkish slave-notables and the newly appointed slaves] as senior notables had to deal with a strong counter-bloc of new slave-notables who had arrived recently, and been appointed to important positions at court and outside. Thus, the boundaries between the elite and other slaves was blurred, mere allegiance to the reigning monarch — and opposition to the monarch's detractors — being the primary criteria for determining a newly-defined ethic of loyalty, and the allotment of offices and responsibilities at court; a newly purchased slave could hope for a high position, something that a common slave [*bandagān-i 'ām*] or a junior page [*ghulām*] could never have expected in earlier times. 'Loyalty' and service were transformed from being one that was based on years of association, to a 'commodity' that could be bought from the market; the political impact of this commodification was the transformation of a subjective service-loyalty to a mercenary trait dependent solely on one's professed allegiance to the crown.

The introduction of this mercantilist timbre may not have been intentional on the part of Raziyya; it would seem that she was simply trying to control the powers of her father's powerful slave-notables. Further, ethnic confederacy was a strength of the Turkish notables who had built it up that way; Raziyya's introduction of *habshīs* may not have been an ethnically motivated move, yet it fundamentally altered — even disrupted —

[27] For the new allocation of offices in Raziyya's reign, Jackson, 'Radiyya', pp. 186-87.

the nature of service loyalty at court. As an extreme example, not much later a slave Ulugh Khan became Sultan Ghiyath al-Din Balban from amongst other slaves, without being nominated to the throne, something that would never have been possible in the period of *chihilganī* dominance.[28]

Thus, the cumulative impact of the actions of Raziyya vis-à-vis the slave-notables was a fundamental alteration of the notions of slave service loyalty in the Delhi Sultanate. This would, in turn, lead to the consideration of other, associated questions with the passage of time in the Delhi Sultanate, like the problems of retaining older slaves/nobles at court, of considering the privileges of old aristocratic families who had been serving the court for a long period of time, the significance and utility of the king's supporters, etc. All these questions are dealt with in the *Fatāwā*, yet Raziyya — whose reign problematised these very issues for the first time in the history of the Delhi Sultanate — herself finds no mention, even indirectly [such as through the mention of the possibility of a woman ruler when other male claimants were present] in the text.[29] The death of Raziyya in AD 1240 brought this important period in the history of the Delhi Sultanate to an end.

The Turkish nobles returned in full power in the period that immediately followed her death, with the appointment of Iltutmish's son Muizz al-Din Bahram to the throne, but Muizz al-Din Bahram could remain on the throne for only 2 years before being killed by the *chihilganī*. In AD 1242, Iltutmish's grandson Rukn al-Din [s/o Rukn al-Din Firuz Shah; *r*. AD 1242-46] was appointed as sultan by the notables, but killed soon too. In AD 1246, Iltutmish's youngest son Nasir al-Din was appointed as ruler [*r*. 1246-66], and his reign saw the emergence of a slave, Ulugh Khan [who would later become Sultan Balban]. Balban's emergence in this scenario is important for our concerns because [as *wazīr*] he would succeed in dissolving the consolidated power of the *chihilganī*, and become the ruler upon the death of his patron, Nasir al-Din.[30] While a

[28] It is important to draw attention to the fact that while the *chihilganī* were constantly trying to appoint puppet rulers from Iltutmish's descendants on the throne, not once did they attempt to appoint any one from amongst themselves as a ruler, something they could have easily done. This is an important indication of the tensions within the slave system as it had emerged in Iltutmish's court.
[29] This is discussed in chapter 5.
[30] Ulugh Khan alias Sultan Ghiyath al-Din Balban has traditionally been seen as part of the *chihilgānī*, for an analysis of this question and that of the possibility of there ever having been a 'group of forty', see Hambly, 'Who were the *Chihilgānī*'; Kumar, 'When Slaves were Nobles'; Jackson, 'Radiyya', pp. 186-87. Jackson's notion of Iltutmish's slaves' relations is totally opposed to what has been described here.

great part of this success was due to Balban's political astuteness and enterprise, some of it must also be derived from the altered nature of service loyalty that had come to inform the court of the Delhi Sultanate since the time of Raziyya. An important element that would enter courtly politics from the time of Balban's reign [AD 1266-87] was the appointment of family members to important royal posts, something that had largely been absent in the subcontinent till now where slaves had afforded the main body of supporters. Hereafter, a number of family kin would enter the political scene, bringing with them certain predetermined loyalties to the ruler, and some new rivalries.

If in the slave system the loyal slaves never aspired to overthrow their master-ruler, the introduction of family members into royal service made the throne vulnerable to the ambitions of aspirants from within, exemplified by the ascension of Ala al-Din Khalaji to the throne in AD 1296 after murdering his uncle Jalal al-Din. This tension – intrigue from kinsmen -- belies the recommendations of the *Fatāwā* which strongly advocates the principle of dynastic and family rule.[31] While slaves continued to form an important part of the courtly elite even at this time, their power and prominence was redefined in light of the entry of family members; the other factor which particularly altered the nature of royal service and loyalty was the arrival – especially after AD 1258, when Hulegu Khan destroyed Baghdad – of freemen nobles who were escaping the Mongol onslaught. Underlying all this was also the fact that by the time the Khalajis came to the throne [1290s], it had been almost a century since the Delhi Sultanate had been established, and had seen waves upon waves of migration, such that there was now a class of indigenous subcontinental Muslims who were new aspirants for courtly positions. Our author Ziya Barani was one such person. Altogether, slaves were now one of many players in the court, and the political structure was no longer dependant singularly on their support. Family members, freemen, immigrants and indigenous Muslims – and in the time of Muhammad bin Tughluq, even non-Muslims – were employed at court.

All this altered fundamentally the unquestioned slave-centred notions of service and loyalty – now, personal merit, heredity, political acumen and other individual traits

See *ibid.*, p. 190: 'Raḍiyya [...] provided a focus for [...] loyalty [...] particularly since the Turkish *ghulām* elite came to enjoy a far more fraught relationship with her successor.'

[31] In the *Fatāwā*, Barani speaks more of the throne passing from father to son than any other form of dynastic rule. Irfan Habib, 'Barani's Theory of the Delhi Sultanate', *IHR*, 7, 1-2, 1980-81, pp. 99-115, makes a strong case for Barani's notion of 'dynastic rule' in his *Tārīkh*.

came to inform a courtier's suitability in the eyes of the ruler, and trust and loyalty was subject to the official positions they occupied. Ziya Barani himself, as section 3 will argue, did not hold any responsible official or courtly position till he was almost 50 years of age, when he was appointed by Muhammad bin Tughluq as a 'confidant'. These changes were signs of the political maturity and 'coming of age' of the Delhi Sultanate, from its emergence as a Ghurid outpost in the later 12th century to being one of two [the other being Cairo] most important bastions against Mongol havoc in the middle of the 14th century. The expansion of the agrarian base into the countryside meant that they no longer had to depend on irregular titular tithe; now the sultanate had a stable economic base with continuous tax returns, increased trade and better revenue administration, allowing for the burgeoning and consolidation of the overall state apparatus.

There were also other forms of support present both within and outside the court, but they were either more subjective [the '*ulamā*] or more contested [*sūfīs*]. The *ulamā* could also be categorised as supporters of the sultan, in that as royal appointees in distant areas as *qazīs* or teachers, they acted as political hinge figures, upholding the superiority of the ruler over the subjects. Inasmuch as they did that, they helped establish and maintain imperial power. A significant difference in the *ṭarbiyat* of a slave and an *ālim* was that while the former was trained in military skills [and usually not in textual knowledge], the latter was equipped mostly with textual knowledge and rarely, if ever, made a good soldier. The *ulamā* were therefore essential to a textual/religious legitimising of political rule, but could barely provide logistical strength to the military-backed expansion of the political realm.

They nonetheless remained in court and in the realm as a necessary part of an Islamic political dispensation. In court, they embodied a parallel and different notion of service, loyalty and support to the ruler, one that was embedded in religious conviction and ambitions, but required political patronage to fulfil them in a foreign, potentially hostile, non-Muslim society. This peculiar, subjective nature of their loyalty kept them in constant tension with the ruler, and their orthodoxy limited their influence over a subject population which was largely non-Muslim. However, at court, they were often known to differ from the sultan in his ideas of political expansion since they considered themselves to be sponsoring – at least ideologically – the making of a *dar al-Islām*

based on the dictates of the *Qur'ān* which was often in contradiction to the political aspirations of the ruler. Yet they legitimised the sultan's rule, even inadvertently through their teachings of obedience to those whom God had chosen to rule and thus helped consolidate Islamic political rule to a limited extant in the larger realm. But as Kumar has demonstrated, with the passage of time and [especially from the time of the Khalajis], the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate began increasingly to patronise *ṣūfīs* over the *'ulamā* as the former had a much broader, popular base and appeal in the multi-religious population of the subcontinent.[32]

Ways of Service

This re-narrativisation of the changing notions of service and loyalty in the court of the Delhi Sultanate should be seen within the scaffolding of the importance of loyalty of royal supporters as 'advised' in the *Fatāwā*, especially since it was written at the end of the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq. The issue figures in a number of ways, and much of it will be discussed later in the dissertation as well. But a brief enumeration here of various types of references intends to be illustrative of the centrality of the loyalty of royal servants, as prescribed in the text.

The text has two separate *naṣīhats* on taking counsel and on royal supporters. The various details outlined leave us in no doubt about the importance of loyalty in the imperial structure, to state the obvious. What is interesting is to notice where and how issues like 'loyalty' and 'support' are invoked, and whether it is done to enhance royal prestige, or control potential recklessness or folly on the part of the ruler. In doing so, the text draws attention to the many ways in which kingship should, needs to, and does use the loyalty of its supporters to realise political ambitions.

The references to service, loyalty, trust and support are all intertwined in the *Fatāwā* and, as chapter 4 will later argue, locates itself tensely amidst the arenas of 'politics' and 'religion'. Further, it also treats loyalty as a human attribute whose utility is explained according to the context of the text, and occasionally other attributes are

[32] *Ṣūfī* literature is not examined in this dissertation, but it is important to highlight that especially the Chishtis – with their strident anti-state inclinations – introduced a new meaning to 'loyalty' in the elite circles of Delhi and elsewhere. A number of elites [Barani and Khusrau, to state two obvious ones] were disciples of the saints along with occupying prominent court positions. See Sunil Kumar, 'Assertions of Authority: A Study of the Discursive Statements of Two Sultans of Delhi', in M. Alam *et al.*, eds, *The Making of Indo-Persian Culture: Indian and French Studies*, New Delhi, 2000, pp. 37-65 for tensions resulting from such alternative relations of loyalty.

added to enhance its relevance. The text does not provide any definition for any of these categories, or significant information about the formation of bonds of fosterage between slave and ruler;[33] in fact, there is precious little information about the buying or training of slaves in the text. This may be indicative of the diminished importance of slave power in the Delhi Sultanate in Barani's courtly life-time, discussed in section 3.

Bearing in mind Barani's essential belief that kingship is in contradiction to the basic expectations of Islam [such as humility and devotion],[34] 'service' appears as an important component and outcome of religiosity: with regards to the ruler, the *Fatāwā* says that he should spend the last 2 *pās*es [lit. 'last, latter part'] of the night 'in the service and worship of God'.[35] Here service is used in a straightforward sense, of submission to God. But being in the service of God also means serving the people: among the requisites of devotion are complete poverty, humility, helplessness and service (to others).[36] Bearing in mind the relationship that he draws between God and the king ['shadow of God'], and the importance of supporters to political rule, he says with regard to Mahmud's supporters that each one of them was 'a hillock of religion and a universe of loyalty, *kūh-i dīndārī va jahān-i ḥalāl* '.[37] What is significant here is the tension between religion and politics that is chronic in the text: note in the above example that 'hillock of religion' and 'universe of loyalty' are separate attributes; at the same time, they are inter-related, and thus reflect the complex weave of political discursivity in Islam. In much the same vein, but here extracting from a different source, the text declares that one of the reasons why rules should be perpetuated is that 'their enforcement [leads] to the increase of loyalty among the nobles and of hope among the commons'.[38] Here Barani intertwines the execution of authority with a two-fold benefit: the ordering of society *and* the increase in loyalty from all groups. In other words, acts of governance – in this case, a well-ordered society realised through rules – is one which benefits everyone, and leads to increased loyalty. What is important here

[33] See mss fol. 26a; text, p. 39; trans., p. 55 which is the only place where he refers to Mahmud of Ghazni's 'class-fellow from his childhood' Ahmad Hasan Maimandi, who was also his counsellor, and below [on slaves] for Maimandi being a slave of Mahmud.
[34] I explain this in chapter 4; also, mss fol. 108b; text, p. 152; trans., p. 218: 'kingship is the very opposite of devotion [...]; fol. 248a; text, pp. 341-42; trans., p. 505, 'kings remain far from God because they cannot fulfil the duties imposed by God [... they] are unable to perform the obligations of *service* to God'.
[35] Steingass, *Dictionary*, p. 249, s.v. 'pas'; mss fol. 107a; text, p. 150; trans., p. 216.
[36] Mss fol. 108b; text, p. 152; trans., p. 218.
[37] Mss fol. 227a; text, p. 311; trans., p. 458. A more accurate translation would be '... hillock of legitimacy'; see Steingass, *Dictionary*, s.v. 'ḥalāl', p. 427.
[38] Mss fol. 159a; text, p. 220; trans., p. 321.

is that Barani does not presume loyalty as given, rather he views it as an attribute that is directly related to the benefits that accrue to the people from governance.

As will become apparent later in this dissertation, there is a pragmatic cosmopolitanism of religiosity and politics in the larger pattern of the text. But here, more often than not, Barani is clear in suggesting that only men of the faith, Muslims – and that too those who are not recent converts but who have Islam 'in their tendons'[39] should be trusted in service, 'the better endowed [he is with] orthodox virtues and commendable loyalty', says the *Fatāwā* while describing the eligibility of the military commander.[40] A commander's worth, in another instance, is tested not just by his ability to command a certain number of horsemen/soldiers, but his 'loyalty [also needs] to be proved and confirmed', and then only should hundreds of thousands of people be given to him in command.[41]

Here he draws attention to the possibility of a disloyal commander turning recalcitrant, which when added to the earlier proposition that only the Faithful should be appointed, would cumulatively mean that Muslims should be trusted in service; however, an equally logical inference defies another truth in the Delhi Sultanate, namely that uprisings and rebellions by *malik*s was a chronic problem, and were often led by Muslim commanders. The tensions of prescriptive politics informed by religious instruction, and the ground realities of opportunistic politics, is a tightrope that the text walks on all along. A truly loyal person is therefore someone who in addition to sincerity and loyalty is adorned with other merits: 'their quest for religion overpowers their desire for the goods of this world'.[42] Thus, those who are truly religious will have no desire to covet this world and would devoutly serve the king [who had been

[39] Mss fol. 72a; text, p. 105; trans., p. 147: '(Hindu slaves) ... though they may grow up for years from childhood to maturity among the Mussulmans, the smell of hereditary Islam and the fear of God, with which the veins and tendons of the bodies of the Mussulmans are imbued, are not found in them.' This statement shows that religious grouping/affiliation of slaves was not always considered by the masters as indicative of their loyalty. Further, the statement is significant bearing in mind that conversion was an important reason behind the growth of Muslim population in India at the time, a trend that was known at the time that Barani was writing this text; cf., Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, Delhi, 1994.

[40] Mss fol. 67a; text, p. 99; trans., p. 138; similarly, see fol. 28a, text, p. 42; trans., p. 59, for a 'conversation' between the caliph Umar and Abdur Rahman, where the caliph says: 'Islam is under many obligations to you. What you have represented is right, and is inspired by your loyalty to the Faith.'

[41] Mss fol. 72b; text, p. 106; trans., p. 148. The emphasis on loyalty in service is also seen, for instance, in the employment of royal helpers and supporters, counsellors, etc. Cf. mss fols 213a, 22b, 23b; text, pp. 292, 34, 36; trans., pp. 428, 48, 50.

[42] Mss fols 56b-57a; text, p. 84; trans., p. 116.

appointed by God to rule over them], and such are the men that the king should look for, and it is their advice that is essential for a king whose 'commanding soul' is vulnerable to vanity and wilfulness 'because of their tremendous power, [and] becomes equal in strength to a thousand furious elephants'. Kings tend to become extreme 'without the advice of their wise and loyal well-wishers'.[43]

But this is difficult, because 'the highest and the best will not enter the services of the king'.[44] The story therefore comes full circle, and in a manner typical of the *Fatāwā*: politics and rulership are antithetical to Islam and true believers will shirk from it;[45] at the same time, politics is a reality of the times, so the king must be careful in choosing those whom he wishes should serve him — the religious and the pious, if Barani's advice be taken! Even the governorships of the caliphs Umar and Usman were well-administered 'because they had very loyal and good helpers', 'Muslim' being presumed in this case.[46]

The *Fatāwā* makes brief but very significant comments about the loyalty of slaves, and the importance of their advice. Early in the text, Barani says that 'in accordance with his father's [Amir Subuktigin] testamentary advice', Mahmud has 'settled the affairs of the kingdom *with the advice of so many loyal slaves*.'[47] The other important reference is also made while talking about Mahmud, but this time in the context of his famous campaign in Somnath. 'They spoke before Mahmud unanimously: "We are obedient and loyal to the King of Islam. Out of loyalty and faithfulness to the king, we humbly submit that we should return as soon as possible"'.[48] Here the slave-soldiers' loyalty makes them warn their master against possible recklessness of action.

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[43] Mss fol. 17a; text, p. 26; trans., p. 35.
[44] Mss fol. 208b; text, p. 284; trans., p. 419.
[45] This is discussed in chapter 4. There are no examples to suggest why Barani may have taken this moral high-ground since the fortunes of the *'ulamā* [and Islam] were closely tied to the fortunes of the political stability of the Delhi Sultanate; on the contrary, Barani argues that those who are learned in the text should be employed – as learners of the *Qur'ān* by heart, an act of accomplished piety in itself; *imāms* of mosques; teachers; etc. See mss fol. 129b, text, p. 179; trans., p. 259 where he mentions that those who are in the service of the orthodox faith should be paid for from the treasury [*Bait al-māl*]. It would be incorrect to presume that the above-quoted statement resonates with Chishti aversion to state employment; it seems more probable that here Barani takes this stand because those who are true believers of God would not wish to be associated with an anti-Islamic institution [kingship] or reap benefits from it.
[46] Mss fol. 209b; text, pp. 285-86; trans., p. 420, for a list of the names of the 'helpers'.
[47] Mss fol. 25b; text, p. 39; trans., p. 54, emphasis mine. The significance of using 'testament, *waṣīya*', is discussed in chapter 5.
[48] Mss fol. 39a; text, p. 59; trans., p. 84.

These two quotes set in relief Barani's political position with regards to a slave army/body of supporters. The fact that almost all the references to slave-soldiers seem to come from Mahmud's time may be indicative of their reduced importance at court in the time of Barani. The quotes recognise, individually and collectively, the political importance – practical and prescribed -- of seeking the advice of slaves, and the innate welfare that slave opinion has with regards to any enterprise of the king.[49] Also, he mentions elsewhere in the text that the king's power and dignity – essential components in his symbolic embodiment of power – is enhanced 'because of a large number of slaves'.[50]

But broadly, Barani's views about the political utility of slaves seem to be informed by events surrounding him when he says that they are 'one group and one mind, and there can be no permanent security against their revolt. Wise men have propounded: "It is difficult to extinguish a domestic fire".'[51] We need to bear in mind the fact that in the *Fatāwā* [as also in some of his other texts, particularly the *Tārikh*] Barani constantly favours dynastic rule over any other, and is very critical of usurpers. Both these positions, coupled with his constant preference for high birth,[52] would have been difficult to maintain if he had been in favour of a slave-powered nobility. Barani was careful in his dismissal of slaves; note for instance that when he commends the post of a commander of the army [the latter being the 'pivot of kingship'][53] he emphasises that, amongst other things, he should be 'a man of family and following', which when seen along with his suggestion of slaves kindling a 'domestic fire' implicitly makes them -- distinguished and valued because of his 'natal alienation and social death' – ineligible for the post of commander. Compared with the realities of the early Delhi Sultanate,

[49] Here the slaves are forbidding Mahmud from continuing in his expedition against Somnath for fear of 'divine' reactions, but Mahmud overrules them, goes ahead with the expedition and emerges victorious. [Mahmud's expedition against Somnath is discussed in detail in chapter 5.] But what is interesting is the sense of precaution that it brings with it, articulated through the mainstay of Mahmud's political force, the slaves in the army. See fol. 71a; text, p. 104; trans., p. 146: 'Mahmud faced difficulty for 12 years to collect and organise 30,000 horsemen from among his slaves'. Note also that this action of Mahmud goes *against* Barani's later advice that the ruler must always heed the advice of his well-wishers: see chapter 4 for more details.
[50] Mss fol. 71b; text, p. 104; trans., p. 146.
[51] Mss fol. 72a; text, pp. 105-6; trans., pp. 147-48; see fols 71a-72a; text, pp. 104-6; trans., pp. 146-48 for the advantages and disadvantages of having slaves.
[52] See for instance fol. 206b; text, p. 282; trans., p. 415; also fol. 220b; text, p. 301; trans., p. 444: '[...] Time reveals the ingratitude, lack of wealth, disloyalty to salt, and the wickedness of the mean, the low, the worthless and the ignoble.'
[53] Mss fol. 66b; text, p. 98; trans., p. 136.

this would seem an anachronism, but by the time of the Tughluqs this was more true than false.

The recognition that the army is indeed the backbone of political rule [as it undoubtedly was in the Delhi Sultanate to some extent], comes through in the importance that the text accords to its loyalty to the ruler. There is an inexhaustible list of such references, but its most interesting rendition comes in the advice on regulating the price of essential commodities by the ruler: 'Just as the army does not become loyal and remain loyal without wealth, similarly it does not remain loyal without the low prices of its requirements'.[54] This is a very significant indicator of the question of loyal service: not only is it important to have a loyal body of supporters, it is equally important to *keep* them loyal. Towards that end, at least in this instance, the king should lower the price of essential commodities, an act which benefits everyone in the kingdom. Economic benefits are central to the loyalty of a salaried support group in this advice, drawing attention once again to the altered nature of the slave body politic; loyalty was no longer based on bonds of fosterage, rather there was a more mercenary element to it, where the master now had to invest positively [materially] to retain loyalty through satisfaction in service, a far cry from the assumed loyalties of slaves in the early Delhi Sultanate.[55] Raziyya's employment and preference for individual slaves over the *chihilganī* seem to bear a resonance in this altered scenario. It should be underlined though that slaves continued to play an important role in the Delhi Sultanate, both in the lower rungs of the army and as responsible officers posted at important positions and outposts to help consolidate political rule, but their singular prominence had diminished greatly.[56]

Drawing from the above, and to bring this brief discussion to a close, it would be useful to highlight the significance that Barani attaches to the ruler *cultivating loyalty* amongst his subjects. Thus, while he urges the king to always recognise the worth of old families in royal service [something from which he himself would have benefited given his

[54] Mss fol. 90b; text, p. 131; trans., p. 184; also, fols 90b-91a; text, p. 131; trans., p. 184, where he speaks of the benefits of price regulation for commoners '... without low prices of the means of livelihood, prosperity, splendour and loyalty do not appear among the subjects and a dense population and general prosperity does not arise.'
[55] But see mss fol. 225b; text, p. 307; trans., p. 456, where Barani warns against loyalty based on 'royal favours'.
[56] See mss fols 161b, 174a; text, pp. 223, 239-40; trans., pp. 326, 352 for some references re. the army and the question of loyalty.

heredity, discussed in the next section], and to reward people 'in accordance with their work',[57] he also says that its main objective is usually 'loyalty to the king'.[58] Loyalty is also cultivated by rewarding the worth of those who have been in long service to the king.[59] But most importantly, Barani says that the king should not throw away the loyalty built over years in 'a moment's anger';[60] in other words, a ruler should not be tyrannical and arbitrary and presume the loyalty of the people as given or achievable by force. On the contrary, he should seek it actively, and work at ways to maintain it; the reference to the need of the king being careful about showing his anger hints also to the general tone of balance that Barani seeks of all rulers for political pragmatism and the retention of kingship. Finally, physical access to the king is the crowning glory of a person's loyalty to the ruler: 'Access and loyalty to the king, his service [...] are made the fountain of rank and the mine of honour.'[61]

Through all this 'love for [the ruler] is so established in the hearts of the nobles and the commons, that everyone considers himself to be a slave, the servant and the loyal well-wisher of the king'.[62]

When strung together, these disparate but representative examples of service and loyalty in the *Fatāwā* seem to be woven around various realities, some preceding Barani's lifetime, and some which were political realities of his life. There are of course certain universal motifs which will become more prominent later: his preference for high birth, for dynastic rule, royal rewards and recognition, etc. But for our immediate purposes, it is important to highlight that Barani saw royal service, and its by-product attribute of loyalty, as separate and interconnected elements in the body politic of the ideal state. Kings strove to attain and retain it through a constant redressal of expectations and reward. But his reliance in religiosity as the well-spring of loyalty shows that his ideas of loyalty and service were devoid of ambition, *unlike* those associated with the *c̲h̲ihilganī* which, as noted earlier, could be counter-productive to the interests of royalty. In the *Fatāwā*, the ruler was the means and ends to everything: hence the nature of advice focussed on submission to kingly rule rather than make

[57] Mss fol. 56b; text, p. 84; trans., p. 116.
[58] Mss fols 60a, 210a; text, pp. 89, 286; trans., pp. 122, 421.
[59] Mss fols 162b, 165b; text, p. 225, 229; trans., pp. 329, 336.
[60] Mss fol. 153a; text, p. 211; trans., p. 308.
[61] Mss fol. 104a; text, p. 147; trans., pp. 210-11.
[62] Mss fol. 55b; text, p. 83; trans., p. 114.

possible individual ambitions. Such advice may be understood better – as also the meanings of a number of other 'advice' in the *Fatāwā* – if we pay attention to the details of his life.

Ziya Barani: Curriculum Vitae

This section provides a life sketch of our author, and in doing so, makes a twin argument: first, that the details of Barani's life as we know it [mostly from other sources] puts in context the content of many advice, and the authorial tone of the text itself; and second, that his life-story [which includes the writing of his other texts] may indicate interesting information about the ways in which history was recorded in these 'contemporary' texts. Tangentially, this section will suggest that formalised education, being limited to the privileged few, may have been an inadvertent tool which helped create a faintly sensitive community of political citizens.

The *Fatāwā* contains almost no information about Barani's life, given the way in which it has been composed. The main pieces of information come either from incidental remarks that he himself makes in his *Tārīkh*, or from the *Siyār al-Awliya* of Amir Khwurd, a close friend and contemporary of Barani.

The general historiographical consensus about Barani's year of birth is AD 1285, coinciding with the last years of the reign of Sultan Ghiyath al-Din Balban, in Baran [near modern Bulandshahr, 'between Meerut and Aligarh', 'southeast of Delhi' in northern India], thus explaining his *nisbat* ['Barani', lit. 'of Baran'].[63]

In the *Fatāwā* he refers to himself as 'Ziya-i Barani' ['ziya', lit. 'light'], 'the well-wisher of the sultan's court', *du'a gūye dargāh-i sulṭānī zīyā-i baranī*, thus confirming his name accurately.[64]

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[63] See Syed Hasan Barani, 'Ziauddin Barani', *Islamic Culture*, 12, 1, January 1938, p. 76; and Irfan Habib, 'Ziya Barani's Vision of the State', *The Medieval History Journal*, 2, 1, 1999, p. 20. Modern atlases cite two 'Barān' in the subcontinent [25° 9N, 76° 40E, 25° 13N, 68° 17E], *Philip's Atlas*, p. 42, G7 and G3 respectively, neither of which seem to be near modern Bulandshahr [28° 28N, 77° 51E], *ibid.*, p. 42, E7. Steingass, *Dictionary*, p. 180, s.v. 'barni', in Persian 'an earthen or glass vessel to keep flowers, confections, medicines or sugar'; in Arabic, a type of date; also s.v. 'barani', 'foreign, external'. There seems to be no reason to believe that Barani would have used his pen-name to suggest 'foreignness'; also, s.v. 'nisbat', p. 1399, 'affinity, connection'. His date of birth is deduced from his *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, ed. S.A. Khan *et al.*, Calcutta, 1860-62, p. 573, where he refers to himself as being in the 74th lunar year.

[64] Mss fol. 1b; text, p. 1; trans., p. 1; Irfan Habib, 'Barani's Theory of the Delhi Sultanate', p. 99, *n.* 1, insisted that this was the only accurate form of his name, but later *idem*, 'Ziya Barani', p. 20, *n.* 2,

According to Syed Hasan Barani, Baran was known to history 'since the time Buddhism came to the fore in India', finds mention in the writings of Al-Beruni [in his *Kitāb al-Hind*], al-Utbi in his *Tārīkh-i Yamīnī*, and Minhaj who in his *Tabaqāt-i Nāsirī* mentions that Iltutmish was the *amīl* of Baran before his accession to the throne. According to al-Utbi, Baran was the capital of the Hindu king Bhimsen Doar, and was conquered by Muizz al-Din of Ghur personally in one of his raids. Following this, some aristocratic families of Saiyyids and Sheikhs were 'awarded *mansabs*' [*sic*!] in the region and other high administrative posts, some of whose genealogies were extant even in the early 20th century.[65] It is unclear how Barani's ancestors came to Baran, or if they ever held it as an official assignment. At least in the reign of Raziyya, it belonged to someone else.[66] But it seems that Barani came from a family that had a fairly long history of serving in courtly and official, imperial positions, and was of aristocratic, *sharīf*, lineage from both sides of his family.

On his paternal side, Barani's grandmother was the daughter of Syed Jalal al-Din Kaithali. In his own words, 'the Saiyyids [*sic*!] of Kaithal were very famous for their geneaological purity', Jalal al-Din being one of the 'most worthy and talented of the Saiyyids of Kaithal'. His paternal grandfather seems to have held a ministerial post as well, because much later Sultan Ala al-Din once referred to Barani's uncle Ala al-Mulk as 'the son of a *wazīr, wazīr-zādā*', and the 'son of an intellectual person'.[67] Barani's father, Mu'aiyad al-Mulk married the daughter of Sipahsalar Husam al-Din, who held a number of government posts including being chamberlain [*wakīl-i dar*] of Malik Bektars, who was the *bārbak* [court master] of Sultan Balban. Later, Husam al-Din was

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corrected this 'piece of misplaced pedantry' by suggesting that in keeping with the social customs of the time, it would have been pretentious to refer to oneself by the full name, the meaning of which could often sound immodest, 'Zīyā al-Dīn' meaning 'Light of the Faith'. Such elevated references were used by others, such as Amir Khwurd who refers to him as 'Zīyā al-Millat al-Dīn', 'Light of the Religion and of the Faith', *Siyār al-Awliya*, Delhi, 1302 A.H., pp. 312-13; Steingass, *Dictionary*, s.v.v. 'zīyā', 'millat', 'dīn', pp. 804, 1306, 554 respectively.

[65] Barani, 'Ziauddin Barani', pp. 76-77. It appears without any cited evidence, though the author mentions that at the time he was writing, he had in his possession 'the original mandate with the monogram of Abul Muzaffer Sultan Muhammad Nasir Amirul Mumineen which tells the story of the conquest and the subsequent administration of the fort.' *Mansabs* were not known to be administrative posts till much later; it may have been given as an '*iqtā*, though no records exist.

[66] *Ibid.*, p. 77, says that 'In the absence of all details we can say nothing certain of his origin or of the date when his family came to Baran.' Jackson, 'Radiyya', pp. 186-87, says that she took the '*iqtā* of Baran from Taj al-Din Sanjar-i Qabaqulaq and 'bestowed it on a son of Hasan Qarluq [...] whom she had welcomed at her court.'

[67] Barani, *Tārīkh*, pp. 350, 262-72, 259. Kaithal [29° 48N, 76° 26E] is north-east of Karnal in Punjab, India. Steingass, *Dictionary*, s.v. 'saiyid', p. 715, a title normally assumed by 'chiefs of the family of the Prophet Muhammad, descended from his daughter Fatima by Ali', thus explaining Barani's assertion of their 'genealogical purity'.

appointed police chief [*shahna*] of Lakhnauti [Bengal] during Balban's expedition in the region, and was asked by the sultan to send him all the news of the capital.[68] Mu'aiyad al-Mulk himself was first appointed as deputy [*na'ib*] to Prince Arkali Khan [son of Sultan Jalal-al-Din Khalaji], and when Ala al-Din Khalaji came to the throne, Barani's father was appointed the officer-in-charge [*nā'ib-o-khwājā*] of Baran. The political instincts that inform the *Fatāwā* may find a resonance in the fact that Ala al-Din being a usurper of the throne would ideally have appointed only his own supporters, those who had distinctly proven their trust to him. But note that even though Mu'aiyid al-Mulk was in the service of one of the main heirs to Jalal al-Din's throne, his own son Arkali Khan, he seems to have been able to convince the new sultan of his trustworthiness. Of course there are no reasons given by Barani; but part of the reason may lie in the character of Barani's paternal uncle, whom we know as Ala al-Mulk.[69] In any case, Barani's father seems to have died early in the reign of Sultan Ala al-Din Khalaji, because we do not hear of him after the initial years of his reign. Syed Hasan Barani suggests that he may have died in the first 3 years of Ala al-Din's reign.[70]

Ala al-Mulk seems to have had a long relationship of trust with Sultan Ala al-Din Khalaji. At the time when Jalal al-Din was the sultan, Ala al-Din [then governor of Kara] went on a campaign to the Deccan, and left the administration of his province in the hands of Ala al-Mulk. Such a position would only be given to someone who enjoyed enormous trust of the sultan. Ala al-Mulk also supported Ala al-Din in his conspiracy against Jalal al-Din, which lead to the nephew becoming the sultan.[71] Ala al-Mulk's intimacy comes through also in his advice to the sultan against leading the army against the Mongols, to which the sultan is said to have replied: '[...] the gravity of the situation demands that all wisdom be relegated to the background, and only cold bloodshed, wanton massacres, and cruel murders conducted by myself are required for the moment'.[72] And when he went to battle, he entrusted the city, the palace and the treasury to Ala al-Mulk.[73] It seems though that Ala al-Mulk also died within the first 5

[68] *Tārīkh*, pp. 42, 60-61, 119, 87.
[69] It may be interesting to note that the names of both Barani's father and uncle may have simply been official titles.
[70] Barani, 'Ziauddin Barani', p. 77.
[71] Ala al-Mulk's obesity was the main reason for him not being given the post of *wazīr*, and was thus made the magistrate [*kotwāl*] of the capital city of Delhi: 'we have given him the office of *kotwāl* on account of his obesity, although he has the right to the post of *vizārat*'. *Tārīkh*, p. 272.
[72] *Tārīkh*, p. 259.
[73] *Ibid.*, p. 257.



years of Ala al-Din's reign: 'Ala al-Mulk, who was the author's uncle [...] did not reap the fruits of Ala al-din's rule and lived only for three or four years [of his reign].'[74]

A number of interesting things emerge from the information above for the issues raised earlier. First, and most importantly, it needs to be highlighted that all the family members of Barani in imperial service were freemen. This highlights the fundamental change in the nature of the courtly nobility that became more and more prominent after Hulegu Khan's sack of Baghdad. Second, and especially in the case of his uncle, the details resonate with advice in the *Fatāwā* where Barani outlines the importance of counsel, of royal supporters, and of the importance of the ruler heeding the cautionary advice of counsellors. Third, it underlines Barani's preoccupation with the high born, with noble lineage and its importance in royal service, and of the importance of rulers recognising the services and protecting the interests of old aristocratic families.

However, this high-status heredity was neither deterministic nor advantageous in Barani's own life, though it seems to have had an impact on his childhood and upbringing. Thus, although Barani would have moved to Delhi at a fairly young age, it is possible to suggest that [perhaps because of the death of both his father and his uncle in his youth] Barani does not seem to have had many connections in the court for a long time. His first, and *only*, royal appointment as *muqarrab* to Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq seems to have occurred around AD 1325, soon after Muhammad bin Tughluq ascended the throne.[75] But he was surely a very prominent personality in the intellectual and social circles in the capital city, and was close to the two other great luminaries, the poet Amir Khusrau and Amir Hasan Sijzi, who recorded the sermons of the Chishti shaikh Nizam al-Din Awliya in his *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād* ['Morals for the Heart']. Barani's initial contacts with the *sūfī pīr* may have been along with his father Mu'aiyid al-Mulk, whose grave lies in the courtyard of the hospice, according to Amir Khwurd.[76] Along with Khusrau and Sijzi, Barani himself was close to the the shaikh, and at least on one occasion claimed that when Nizam al-Din was defeated in a court dialogue, he called

[74] *Ibid.*, pp. 336-37.
[75] *Ibid.*, pp. 466-67, 497, 504, 516-17 where he refers to this appointment, of becoming a 'servant of the court, *mulāzim-i dargāh*'. Steingass, *Dictionary*, p. 1292, s.v. 'muqarrab' [see under 'maqrab'], 'approximated, admitted, allowed to approach, nearly related, an intimate friend, one near the throne, courtier, favourite, cherubim'; Khwurd, *Siyār*, p. 313 says Barani was appointed *nadīm*; Steingass, *Dictionary*, p. 1394, s.v. 'nadīm', 'boon companion, intimate friend, privy counsellor, confidant, king's favourite'.
[76] *Siyār*, p. 312.

Barani [along with some others] to tell them the details upon his return to the hospice.[77] Further, the fact that in the last days of his life he took refuge in the shaikh's hospice attests to a close relationship that Barani shared with the saint. Yet, like Khusrau, Barani did not shirk from accepting a courtly office when the offer was made, in complete contradiction to the anti-state nature of Chishti attitudes and teachings. This is important for us for a couple of reasons: one, it underlines the pragmatic and pro-state disposition of Barani's nature which is evident [in this case] from an example from his personal life, and otherwise easily noticeable in the text; and two, the almost total absence of any *sūfī* influence or reference from the *Fatāwā*, made more stark by the fact that by the time he was serving the court, *sūfī*-sultan tensions were a very important factor in the art of governance in the Delhi Sultanate, there being (by the 1290s) an increasing reliance upon *sūfī* saints [over the *'ulamā*] as legitimisers of political rule.

The post of *muqarrab* was an important one, and would have made Barani privy to and given him access to many political conversations and problems at the court. The need to retain this post, which he had got at a ripe age [approximately 50 years] meant that he had to become a pliant 'yes man',[78] drawing our attention once again to the nature of courtly service and loyalty that was real in his lifetime. Irfan Habib has suggested that one of the reasons for Barani's inveterate hatred for the low-born and non-Muslims – a recurrent motif in the *Fatāwā* -- may have been because of the fact that he had been unable to get a court position till very late in his life.[79] By the time of Muhammad bin Tughluq, the court now employed a number of non-Muslims and converts, both of whom Barani considered as ineligible for trust and thus for royal service. Barani's *Tārīkh* shows that he was not just an important member of the courtly nobility, but accompanied the royal army on a number of expeditions. At least in one instance, after the successful campaign in Deogir, Barani travelled from Delhi with messages of congratulations to the Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq.[80]

When the sultan died in AD 1351, and Firuz Shah ascended the throne, all of Barani's privileges came to an abrupt end. He was incarcerated at Bhatnair for about 5 months, whereafter he was released but could not, in the remaining 6-7 years of his life regain

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[77] Khwurd, *Siyār*, p. 313, cited in Habib, 'Ziya Barani', p. 21.
[78] *Tārīkh*, pp. 466, 516-17.
[79] Habib, 'Ziya Barani', p. 22.
[80] *Tārīkh*, pp. 516-17.

any courtly position of favour.[81] He was reduced to utter poverty and in fact spent the last years of his life at the hospice of Nizam al-Din Awliya in Ghiyathpur [modern Nizamuddin in central Delhi]. The exact date of his death remains unknown, but Amir Khwurd writes that when he died 'he had no clothes and not a single penny with him, the clothes of his body he had given to charity. Sack-cloth served as coffin sheet [...] He departed from this world as a pauper, as everyone must depart, and was buried in the neighbourhood of the grave of Sultan al-Mashaikh [Nizam al-Din Awliya], and just below his father's.'[82] Syed Hasan Barani has identified the depository of his remains to the south of his friend Amir Khusrau's grave. 'No inscription or memorial stands on his grave to commemorate him, still there is no reason to doubt his burying place.'[83] When I visited the Nizamuddin *dargāh* in September 2001, I was shown an unattended, green-painted grave almost flattened to the ground as that of Ziya Barani [Plate 7]. Few knew whose grave it was, and only one elderly person was able to point it out to me confidently. No one knew anything more about it.

There is almost no information available about the education that Barani received, or may have received at the time, and anything that is said must be tentative. Yet, it seems important to mention it briefly in light of the larger argument being made about the impact of his life on his ideas and texts. *All* his texts were written in his last years of poverty, towards the end of his life. It would seem that he had no books in his possession to refer to, yet the need to frequently cite authoritative texts underlines the essentially 'academic' attitude that he had in writing the *Fatāwā*.[84] Some knowledge of the setting, and the few bits of information gleaned from various sources may provide some useful information.

Barani seems to have come to the capital city in his boyhood, when his father was in the imperial service. As was usual practice across the Islamic world at the time, children usually received their initial education at home, giving them a preliminary grounding in the *Qur'ān* and the Arabic language. In Barani's case this would have

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[81] *Tārīkh*, p. 544 for the reference to Bhatnair following Firuz Shah Tughluq's accession; Khwurd, *Siyār*, p. 313 maintains that he voluntarily vacated his position and thereafter received a stipend, *māyahtāj*, from Sultan Firuz Shah. Given Barani's own reference to imprisonment, and his consequent poverty of which he speaks in many places (including the *Fatāwā*, mss fols 246a-47a; text, pp. 338-40; trans., pp. 500-2), Khwurd's statement seems unacceptable.

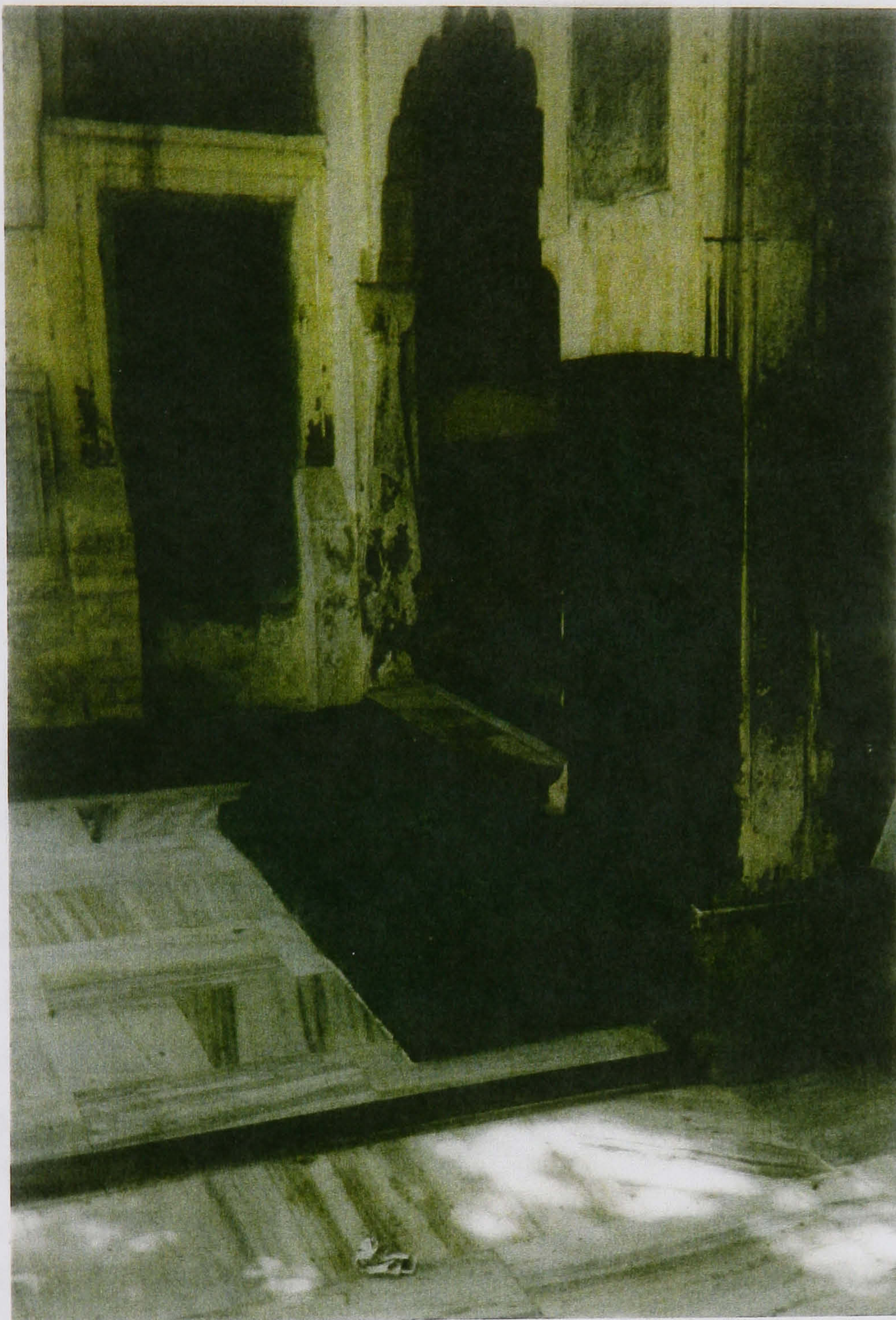
[82] *Siyār*, p. 312.

[83] Barani, 'Ziauddin Barani', p. 88.

[84] There has been no attempt till date to chronologise the various texts written by Barani. He seems to have had the Arabic version to the *Tārīkh-i Āl-i Barāmikā* with him, since this was a Persian translation.

Plate 7

Ziya al-Din Barani's grave [??]



been abetted by the fact that his grandmother was also a learned woman, 'a lady of profound scholarship and spiritual insight and accomplishment'.[85] He mentions in his *Tārīkh* that he finished reading the *Qur'ān* and started learning the alphabet in the days of Sultan Jalal al-Din Khalaji, and completed the rest of his education in the reign of Sultan Ala al-Din Khalaji.[86] He would most definitely have been based in Delhi at the time, given that his father was in the service of the court.[87]

In Delhi at this time, according to Barani, there lived

> scholars who were highly learned, and scholars of that calibre were not to be found in Bukhara or Samarqand or Damascus or Tabriz or Isfahan or Byzantium or in any part of the world; and in every art that they took up, commentaries, theology, the principles of religion, grammar, explanations, discourse, logic, their researches were hair-splitting, and every year a number of students graduated under their training, and they were able to challenge theological decisions; and some of the teachers in point of learning were the equals of Ghazzali and Razi.[88]

This is perhaps exaggerated, but should neither be unbelievable, nor surprising. The Mongol ransack of Baghdad in 1258 had led expressly to the dislocation of all elites from the city [the caliph having been killed]; this fleeing population included amongst them a number of teachers and learned men, who were accomplished and reputed in the Islamic world for their learning. The fleeing population settled in the two main political refuges of Islam in the eastern world safe from the Mongols, Cairo and Delhi. In his *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo*, Jonathan Berkey makes a strong case for the influx of scholars and the emergence of Cairo 'as a cultural hub of the central Islamic world'. The same may be said about the Delhi Sultanate, though it did not meet with the same patronage as those in Cairo found from successive Mamluk sultans.[89]

Not all these intellectuals, as accomplished as Barani makes them to be, would have found employment in the relatively limited number of *madrasa*s in the sultanate;

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[85] *Tārīkh*, p. 350.
[86] *Ibid.*, pp. 352-53.
[87] He mentions in the *Tārīkh* how he used to hear various stories from his uncle about the *majlis*es of Sultan Ala al-Din Khalaji, suggesting trust and intimacy with the sultan; *Tārīkh*, pp. 156, 165, 199, 201, 365. On *majlis*es, Mohammad Aziz Ahmad, 'The Imperial Majlises in the Early Sultanate Period', *PIHC*, 5th session, Hyderabad, 1941, p. 322.
[88] *Tārīkh*, pp. 352-53.
[89] Jonathan Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: A Social History of Islamic Education*, Princeton, 1992, p. 9 and *passim*.

insufficient records exist about the deeds that brought *madrasas* into existence, making a study like that of Berkey impossible for the Delhi Sultanate. But as Barani himself says, this did not mean that they would have not been considered intellectuals, worth seeking out for knowledge. As A. L. Tibawi contended long ago, in spite all the formal educational institutions, traditional Islamic learning, from the time of its inception, remained fundamentally informal, flexible and tied to persons rather than to institutions.[90] Barani seems to support this idea when he says 'I have been a pupil [...] of some; I have gone to others; most of them I have met in literary assemblies.'[91]

Thus Barani would have been recipient of the most careful and privileged education available at the time, from which he must have benefited immensely. His language shows that he had command of both Arabic and Persian, and the comfortable use of Hindustani words in all his works mean that he was comfortable with the main local dialect as well. In terms of the content of education, as was wont in those times, his curriculum would have included both the *ulum al-naqlīyya* ['traditional and transmitted sciences', namely the *Qur'ān*, *hadīs*, jurisprudence (*fīqh*), commentaries, theology, etc. all of which ultimately trace their authority to the Prophet and his sermons], and the *ulūm al-aqlīyya* ['rational sciences', those that were learnt from the Hellenistic world, like philosophy, logic and mathematics] though he makes little mention of the latter in his *Tārīkh*. But for our purposes, the most interesting piece of information comes from his *Tārīkh*, in the introduction to which he writes in some detail about the virtues of the discipline of History.

The subject of History is the record of good and evil, justice and injustice, rights and their opposite, virtues, sins, vices and weaknesses of the ancients, so that posterity may take their lessons to heart and see the good of justice and the evils of injustice so far as political statecraft is concerned, and they may adopt virtuous ways and refrain from evildoing.[92]

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[90] A.L. Tibawi, 'Origin and Character of *al-Madrasah*', *BSOAS*, 25, 1962, pp. 225-38; also Brinkley Messick, *The Calligraphic State: Textual Domination and History in a Muslim Society*, Berkeley, 1996, p. 15, 'in an intellectual world in which the texts of knowledge were literally embodied, [and] their conveyance reckoned in terms of known relayers, authority of this sort relied upon the specification of human links between intellectual generations', draws attention to the 'human' over the 'institutional' in Islamic education.

[91] *Tārīkh*, p. 354; literary assemblies, *majlis*, were a common feature of Islamic courts.

[92] *Tārīkh*, pp. 12-13. The *Fatāwā* is also said to have had a lengthy introduction [Khan, 'Fatāwā', p. LIV], but unfortunately is missing from the manuscript. It would have been of great value for us to appreciate better the nature of the text.

This may explain greatly the tone that Barani adopts in the *Fatāwā*: of being completely authoritarian in his command of advice, and relying on evidence from the past – albeit often concocted – to underscore the relevance, importance or worth of what he is saying. All the categories mentioned in the quote above – justice, injustice, rights, statecraft, etc. are prominent motifs in the *Fatāwā*. What is significant is Barani's reference to 'posterity', because [as the Conclusion of this dissertation will suggest], it seems possible to say that the *Fatāwā* had little or no readership at the time that it was written. Finally, it is important to draw attention to Barani's constant juxtaposition of the positive and the negative, the reverse and the obverse of everything, making us aware of the fact that while he may have seen the *study* of History as the 'knowledge of the doings of the Prophets, caliphs, sultans, and political and religious leaders', the *writing* of History was a far more down-to-earth, pragmatic and realistic exercise with definite benefits for the reader.

But as any text of Barani's would show, he believed inalienably in the dominance and supremacy of the high-born, the Muslim, the elite. Echoing this mentality, unsurprisingly he says further that

> It is only the chosen ones, gifted with intelligence, who are entitled to a study of history; the lesser, the rascals, the untutored, the mean-spirited, and the people of crooked intelligence, the down-trodden, the scoundrels, the black-guards have nothing to do with History. History will do them no good, and it is absolutely useless for them.[93]

An elite background, the privilege of working in courtly circles [with the attendant bearings thereof], life in the capital city with all the frivolities and excesses of youth,[94] education in a traditional Islamic mould focussing on the knowledge of the *Qur'ān* and related subjects, from some of the best intellectuals, his own privileges as a court official of Muhammad bin Tughluq, his inveterate hatred for the low-born and the non-Muslim and the reality of it in his personal life, coupled with the prosopographic nature of his understanding of the subject of History, should all be borne in mind while analysing his texts. Added to this was Barani's important exposure to an alternative form of Islamic knowledge, that of the *sufi*s. While Barani makes no direct reference to any scholastic training that he may have received here, he was certainly aware of their

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[93] *Tārīkh*, p. 9.
[94] *Ibid.*, p. 165: 'I look back in remembrance to those days of frivolity which I spent with the most high-souled and high-spirited personalities of the time.'

teachings – spiritual, anti-state, and unlike all the textual teachings of the *'ulamā* -- because of his close proximity to Nizam al-Din Awliya, and before that to the more controversial Sidi Maula.[95] Obviously, Barani was not greatly influenced by them in making decisions in his personal life, and he was most definitely a traditional *ālim* in his own right. But one should not underestimate the impact and importance of the mystical company of which he was also a part.

In conclusion, one point should be mentioned in brief, that relating to the nature of formal education that was imparted to *'ulamā* at the time. It needs to be borne in mind that Islamic education deeply affected the recording of History, most importantly in terms of the vocabulary that was used and the nature of ideals and imageries that held the entire educational scaffolding in place. Also, its primary corpus of knowledge being derived from the *Qur'ān* and attendant texts in the Arabic language[96] meant the superiority of this knowledge over all else in Islam, and those who possessed this were entitled to employ it in every vocation of theirs, including the writing of History!

The knowledge so gained placed the *'ulamā* at the pinnacle of society; yet they needed patronage and support to lead their lives. They therefore entered into a mutually convenient relationship with rulers and sought employment, yet their learning essentially opposed the very institution of kingship as being unIslamic. According to a late medieval Arabic treatise 'Kings are the rulers of the people, but scholars are the rulers of kings.'[97] The rulers too used the *'ulamā* to their advantage; by appointing them in distant areas as *qāḍīs*, teachers, *imāms*, *maulavīs*, etc. the sultan was able to extend his political arm further into the larger realm. By the very nature of their teachings which upheld the position of the sultan as God's chosen ruler over the people, coupled with the Prophetic injunction that those above must be obeyed, the *'ulamā* acted as important political hinge figures. Their command over the *shar'īa* and their right to interpret it for the layman made them 'guardians of an organic body of knowledge, the

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[95] A *dervish* from northern India, he was put to death by Sultan Jalal al-Din Khalaji on suspicion of patronising seditious groups in his hospice; see Barani, 'Ziauddin Barani', p. 82.

[96] It is interesting to note that despite the efflorescence of Persian (and many other languages later on), the *Qur'ān* continued to be studied in the original Arabic language in all parts of the Islamic world in the belief that translation would alter the meaning of the Holy Word which could be expressed only in that language. By default, Arabic itself came to gain a sacral position in intellectual circles and remained so for a considerable period of time despite the prevalence of other major languages. See Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture*, New York, 1989, p. 29*f.*

[97] Al-Askari, *al-Hathth 'alā talab al-'ilm*, fols 6r-v, quoted in Berkey, *Transmission of Knowledge*, p. 4 *n.*

transmission of which largely shaped Muslim culture, and which in itself defined the legitimacy of kings'.[98]

At the other end of the spectrum, the fact that Islam is an all-embracing way of life meant that all Muslims – elite and common -- were encouraged to acquire, from their birth, at least a functional familiarity with the *Qur'ān* and its contents, as also the prescribed everyday practices [prayers, fasting, abstinence] that informed every Muslim's life. While this obviously did not mean that every Muslim would go on to become a scholar, it leant to the people a certain cohesion through familiar forms of knowledge and cognisable forms of behaviour, which the *'ulamā* could, if need arose, manipulate in favour of kingly authority.

In the Delhi Sultanate, this was possible only up to a limited extent given the numerical minority of Muslims at the time, as also their pre-eminently urban location. The *'ulamā* would therefore have been useful to the rulers only in the initial stages of political establishment and domination, when other claimants were in the fray, to help legitimise the king's rule. However, with the passage of time this would have proven relatively ineffective and possibly counter-productive when the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate had to use newer ways to consolidate their power and had to move further and further away from *Qur'ān*ic, textual prescriptions. In this altered scenario, and with the arrival of Sufism in the subcontinent, the *sūfī pīr*s would have been a much more potent tool for the incorporation and dissemination of authority at the popular level.[99] Thus, Kumar's assertion that after the first century of the establishment of political rule in the subcontinent more and more rulers relied on *sūfīs* rather than on the *'ulamā* for political leverage at the public level ties up with the broader picture painted here surrounding the acquisition of education and the making of the *ālim*. While the political maturation of the Delhi Sultanate, the emergence of indigenous Muslim elites, and the influx of elites from Central Asia and the Middle East may have altered the nature of nobility within the court leading to a lessening of slave-notables [the history of Barani's family being a case in point], it was also a time when political pragmatism and maturity led to the employment of non-Muslims in courtly service, an idea that was abhorrent to Barani. Irfan Habib thus suggests that this meant that Barani did not get proper employment till

98 Berkey, *Transmission of Knowledge*, p. 4.
99 Kumar, 'Emergence', pp. 236-305.

an advanced age despite being prominent in Delhi's social and intellectual circles and having had a family history of serving the rulers, leading to 'inner resentment'.[100] If this be true, then this 'resentment' was made obvious aplenty in the *Fatāwā*, but in tactful ways interwoven with the more important realities of establishing political control in an area where the largest subject population was non-Muslim.

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This chapter has tried to locate both Barani and his texts within the larger picture of the Delhi Sultanate, by revisiting it from the perspective of service and loyalty on the one hand, and the personal life and subjective realities of the author on the other. Its purpose has been to draw attention to the material-cultural and intellectual context in which the *Fatāwā* was produced, and how its making may help us to appreciate better the meanings of its advice. The next chapter moves away from the political and into the textual world, and traces the evolution of the 'Mirrors' *genre* of literature, to locate the *Fatāwā* in another context of evolving ideas.

[100] Habib, 'Ziya Barani', p. 22; note however that on p. 25 Habib also says that Barani 'sought solace through his pious works' with reference to his more religious texts discussed in the Introduction.

3

THE NOETIC ECONOMY OF ADVICE LITERATURE

It is a matter of distinction that the largest volume of literature in the Persian language – both poetry and prose – has been produced in the Indian subcontinent over the last millennium and more. Writers, both Muslim and non-Muslim, used more than one language (sometimes up to three) in a single work, thereby '[making] it impossible to draw distinct boundary lines'.[1] This, in time, gave birth to the 'Indian style' of writing in Persian literature [*sabk-i Hindī*] with Amir Khusrau, the poet laureate of the Delhi Sultanate, being considered most influential in the genesis of this style, a creative tradition that has evolved tediously over many centuries since. What lies behind this is a framework of political and social realities, the intricacies of which informed and affected the development of literature in all pre-modern societies.[2] While the mapping of such a dual history would be most interesting for the Delhi Sultanate, it falls outside the purview of this dissertation;[3] but the proposition that the political, social and intellectual *context* in which writers produce their works inform its *contents* will be one of the considerations of this chapter. Particular attention will, however, be paid to the percolation of ideas and concepts relating to governance via literature *across* political and geographical space, and to simultaneously trace the evolution of the 'Mirrors' *genre*.[4]

The dominant and apprehended perception of the role of political patronage in the expansion of Islamic political and literary culture is undercut by the sometimes inverse relationship that the two share with one another. The general assumption that it is mostly in times of supreme dynastic political power [usually implying 'peace and prosperity'] that literature and the arts 'flourish' is contradicted by Julie Meisami's meticulous analyses of Persian historical writings and their contexts: Firdausi's

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[1] Annemarie Schimmel, *Islamic Literatures of India*, in Jan Gonda, ed., *A History of Indian Literature*, Part of Vol. VII, Wiesbaden, 1973, p. 1.
[2] See Muzaffar Alam, 'The Pursuit of Persian: Language in Mughal Politics', *Modern Asian Studies*, 32, 2, 1998, pp. 317-49. Persian prose-writing flourished in the subcontinent across the Mughal empire, and Alam argues forcefully for the political bases of its efflorescence.
[3] For a brief but useful survey of the development of Persian in the Delhi Sultanate, see Muzaffar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam in India: c. 1200-1800*, New Delhi, 2004, pp. 115-22; also M. A. Khan, *Some Important Persian Prose Writings of the Thirteenth Century A.D. in India*, Aligarh, 1970.
[4] As a useful introduction, see Patricia Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought*, Edinburgh, 2004.

Shāhnāma — the high-point of Persian literary culture, and considered a classic till date — was started when the Samanids [who, despite their political success, seem to have left no dynastic history] were in crisis, and the poet finally presented it at the Ghaznavid court; Ghaznavid history in Persian began to be recorded only after their loss of the precious territories of Khurasan and the surrounding areas to the Saljuqs; the history of the latter was not to be written till their last century in power, by when they had been weakened by endemic internal strife! In short, 'the curves of historical writing [did] not [necessarily] duplicate those of dynastic florescence ....'[5] And finally, there is the vexed issue of the influence of Persian on Arabic works and, in the case of the subcontinent, one may confidently add Turkish as well.

Section 2 of this chapter attempts to chart the arrival of Persian political-textual ideas and literary influences in the subcontinent to create a context in which the genre of 'Mirrors for Princes' texts may be set in relief, as also attempt to search for the more definite textual routes of some of the ideas of sovereignty and kingship evident in the *Fatāwā*. The parts, cutting back-and-forth, will concentrate on the developments in the field of literature, and the evolution of political/ 'wisdom' [*ḥikma*] ideas in literature in the main. Despite its brevity, the exercise should be useful to unravel the complex etymology of Barani's ideas, and the framework of ideas in which he saw his texts, and the semantic arena in which he wished them to perform. Part I traces the flow of Persian political ideals and cultures [through textual sources] from pre-Islamic times to the Ghaznavid court, some of which will be touched on in later chapters while discussing the *Fatāwā*; Part II focuses on the Indian subcontinent, and some relevant comparative texts.[6]

From 'Jahiliyya' to Ghazni

As the title of this section indicates, received wisdom has implied that Central Asia and the Near and Middle East, before the arrival of Islam, was 'ignorant'. This pervasive Islamic religious stereotype was abetted by the reverence that almost all scholars of

[5] Julie Scott Meisami, *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century*, Edinburgh, 1999, pp. 4-5.
[6] For reasons of space, I have completely omitted discussion of 'history' texts and focussed on 'Mirrors'. However, my understanding is also that political ideas expressed in 'Mirrors' were not in direct

Islam attributed somewhat involuntarily to the Arab land and language with which the birth and expansion of the Islamic faith and politics is [correctly] identified even today. However, Arabia being the cradle of the faith did not necessarily make it the creator of all that has since come to be identified as 'Islamic'. In fact, a lot of what passes in the name of 'Islamic' by way of cultural trends, literary styles, dress, ideas, food habits, governance, administrative models, manners, morals, etc. are extractions, derivations, adaptations or infusions from a host of other vibrant civilisational cultures — Greek/Hellenistic, [pre-Islamic] Persian, and Indian, to name the most obvious ones. Of these, Persian influence was perhaps the most vigorous and dynamic given its geographical proximity to the Arab heartland, as also because of its superiority in various fields, especially politics and administration. Greek influence on Persia was both due to the flow of ideas, and to its occupation by Alexander the Great.[7] Culturally, their language had affinities with the classical languages of both Europe and the East, especially Sanskrit. Geographically, the people seem to have migrated from the region of the Caspian Sea where they [probably] separated from their natal stock, and moved southwards through the region of the Oxus/Jaxartes to Central Asia with which they have since been identified.[8]

The confident political history of Persia has been one of the strongest reasons for the basis of any chauvinism that one might trace in Perso-Arab relations. The Sunni legist Ibn Jarir al-Tabari [d. 923], concerned as he was with 'tracing the success and failure of the various communities that had been summoned to follow God's will',[9] wrote in his *Universal History* that 'the Persian kings continued in unbroken succession from the days of Jayumart until they vanished with the coming of the best nation, the nation of our prophet Muhammad ....'[10] How much they 'vanished' in real terms has been a matter of much debate; but it is more or less accepted that Persian presence in the Arab Islamic world has been far more than is generally known or understood. Ehsan

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opposition to those articulated in dynastic histories, though they should not be seen to complement each other.

[7] Reuben Levy, *Persian Literature: An Introduction*, London, 1923, rpt. 1936, p. 5. As part of the great Byzantine Empire, Persia herself was influenced by Hellenism; the very name 'Persia' derives from the Greek 'Persis' relating to the province of 'Pārs' [i.e., 'Fārs'], a region predominant at the time when the Greeks were there.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, p. 352.

[10] Ehsan Yarshater, 'The Persian Presence in the Islamic World', in Richard G. Hovannisian and Georges Sabagh, eds, *The Persian Presence in the Islamic World*, Cambridge, 1998, p. 10.

Yarshater [along with Meisami] has been the most recent scholar who has written in detail on this matter;[11] he makes the case most eloquently, despite his veiled conviction in the superiority of 'Persian culture', the prevalence of which he presents as 'durability' instead of 'adaptability'![12]

The first well-known king of Persia is Cyrus the Great [r. 558-530 B.C.]; but the beginnings of Persian literature are more confidently traceable to one of his successors, Darius [r. 521-485 B.C.].[13] This dynasty of the Achaemenids was to be overthrown by Alexander the Great in 331 B.C. Along with the political dislocation, another important displacement was that of Zoroastrianism — the religion of the Achaemenids — along with their texts. Hereafter, and till the arrival of the Sassanians in A.D. 224, Persia was to be heavily swamped by Hellenism, with a near-total absence of any literary activity for about 550 years. Political division of the erstwhile Achaemenid territories between the two generals of Alexander, Seleucus and Archelaus and their personal rivalries contributed further to the 'total disappearance of [Persian] works';[14] in fact, Yarshater identifies the period as one when '[Persia] had abdicated its distinctive character and was being absorbed into another culture.'[15] The absence of contemporary literary works from this period has also allowed for a counter-argument: that, in fact, Hellenistic influence on Islamic civilisation, mainly in science and philosophy, occurred much later [during the Abbassid period and after], and first through translated material from Arabic and only later through direct engagement. Further, its impact on literary activities was minimal even in later times, and perhaps unknown in pre-Islamic times.[16]

The 400+-year rule of the Sassanians from A.D. 224-651 which followed that of the Greeks was a period in which political culture entered a new phase in this region. Centralisation was the keyword, and political power was articulated through a complex

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[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 4-125.
[12] Yarshater, 'Persian Presence', p. 105: 'The reemergence of the Persian way of life and culture after each period of eclipse proves that the essence of the culture has not been lost, only veiled. Indeed, durability, despite many vicissitudes, has been one of the main features of Persian cultural history.'
[13] Records of his campaigns in Old Persian character are still extant, the most important one lying about 30 miles east of Kirman on the Khurasan highway, in a place called Bahistun.
[14] Levy, *Persian Literature*, pp. 6-10; Yarshater, 'Persian Influence', pp. 15-22; E.G. Browne, *The Literary History of Persia*, Cambridge, 1928.
[15] Yarshater, 'Persian Presence', p. 105.
[16] A. H. H. O. M. Dawood, 'A Comparative Study of Arabic and Persian Mirrors for Princes from the Second to the Sixth Century A.H.', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1965, p. 7 and *passim*.

mechanism involving symbols of authority, and asserting legitimation.[17] However, what needs to be underlined is that the Sassanians saw themselves as successors of the Achaemenid/Persian traditions, evident most notably in their patronage of Zoroastrianism. The connection with religion is in part intentional; it is here that we come across the most assertive example of political leadership identified with God [after the Egyptians] in the 'Covenant' of Ardashir, the progenitor of the Sassanian dynasty. What the Sassanians achieved most remarkably in their practice of sovereignty was a blend of 'justness', 'divinity', 'morality', 'order' and 'splendour' — concepts prevalent in earlier political dispensations in different parts of the world, but derived, adapted and made visible as an emboldened and strident political statement! It is interesting to note that all these ideas, along with Ardashir's name, appear frequently in the *Fatāwā*.[18]

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One sees a combination of these concepts in almost *all* advisory/wisdom literature [in Islamic polities] which have tried to articulate the bases of sovereign authority and power; and such literature — even in non-Islamic political dispensations — was not uncommon. In fact, 'Mirrors for Princes' [including its pre-, proto, classical and comparative genres] are found in most ancient and medieval polities — the ancient Near and Middle East, classical Greece, China, the Indian subcontinent, and medieval European polities as well. 'The prevalence of this genre', according to Robert Dankoff, 'is due to the function of such a literature in an autocratic society: it embodies a conservative tradition ....'[19] It also contains, to carry Dankoff's suggestion further and belabour a point made earlier, the development of concepts derived from elsewhere and incorporated to suit immediate contexts. This dual exercise of incorporation and adaptation, chronic to these texts, will figure liminally as we begin our examination. A somewhat obvious point, however, also needs emphasis: apart from the prevalence of 'belief' systems [systematised into 'religion' in later times] and the background of the

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[17] For a history of this period, see *The Cambridge History of Iran*, ed. E. Yarshater, Cambridge, rpt 1993, Vol. 3, Parts 1&2, pp. 116-80, 568-612.

[18] Ardashir's name appears first on mss fol. 20b; text, p. 31; trans., p. 43, and innumerable times thereafter. All these are discussed in chapter 4.

[19] Robert Dankoff, 'Introduction', in Yusuf Khass Hajib, *Wisdom of Royal Glory (Kutadgu Bilig): A Turko-Islamic Mirror for Princes*, trans with an Introduction and Notes by Robert Dankoff, Chicago, 1983, p. 4; also, Dawood, 'Comparative Study', p. 14, where he says that 'political absolutism ... tends to create an atmosphere propitious for the emergence of political advisory literature, which can thus be considered a natural byproduct of absolute rule.'

ruling class under whose patronage these texts were being written [tribals, sedentary populations, immigrants, etc.], one must underline the importance of geography, territory, trade, urbanisation, etc. as factors affecting the development of literary ideas, concepts and genres. To put it in another way, if context informs content, the meaning of texts is better understood bearing its semantic arena in mind; inferentially, 'semantic arena' would include not just physical realities and exigencies, but derived conceptual etymologies through which texts are formed and read as well.

The idea that kingship and divinity were connected and complementary is evident from many examples. The obverse of temporal authority and the execution of worldly authority was the spiritual, other-worldly 'reality', afforded most easily by Nature. The ideological genesis of actual royal/political power was often sought in the supra-real domain of 'belief', perhaps as a matter of convenience, but true nonetheless. This was not surprising, because the maintenance of status-quo was the primary function and desire of ruling and privileged groups and hierarchies were easy to construct vis-à-vis God; a Babylonian proverb from the reign of Esarhaddon (r. 680-669 B.C.) states: 'Man is the shadow of a god, a slave is the shadow of a man; but the king is the very image of god.'[20] With the passage of time, as texts grew in conservatism to reflect the increasing stratification of polities, 'man' would slowly fall from being the 'shadow of god', and so will the king: from being 'the very image of god', the sovereign so exalted in the *Fatāwā* would take up man's position of *zilillāh*, 'shadow of god'.[21]

Hereafter, the king was slowly moving towards becoming an embodiment of divinity: celestial metaphors [sun, moon, stars], used earlier, became more frequent. If in Babylon Hammurabi was 'chosen' by God to 'appear like the sun to the black-headed people ...', and Egyptian kingship was being likened to sunrise, by the time of the Achaemenid king Cyrus, the king was part of a larger [cosmic] universe, 'brother of Sun and Moon, his name [was] among the stars'. This correlation of temporal authority with natural forces ideologised the need for the institution of kingship; kingship was as necessary to humanity as were sun and water, and other elements of nature.[22] The subject populace was thus expected, at least in literature, to be *naturally* amenable to

[20] J. B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, Princeton, 1955, p. 426.
[21] Mss fol. 92b; text, p. 133; trans., p. 188.

royal authority, an idea that is problematised in the *Fatāwā* through dependence on *Qur'ān*ic injunctions![23]

The textual organisation of kingship with reference to binary poles — sun & shadow, sun & moon, man & slave — allowed for social stratification to be textually solidified, the fear of chaos and anarchy being always imminent, as would be wrought by the wrath of nature's other forces: for Cyrus' 'element' was fire, and 'the fire nimbus ... the aureole of Glory .... As long as the aura is present, the realm prospers; if it is absent, the realm suffers.' Examples confirm that the metaphor of 'aura' — an invisible but palpable abstraction, and thus a useful category — was to show amazing tenacity, and become one of the most pervasive devices in both literature and art to uphold royal ideologies.[24]

If the king was the administrator of God's realms on Earth, 'justice' and 'prosperity' [with attendant ideas of 'splendour' and 'prestige'] were its results; and while the responsibility of dispensing this duty was squarely located at the king's doorstep, implicit in the ideology was the subjects' association with it. This was an important development, for almost all royal ideologies — and especially Islamic royal ideologies — would make provisions for the prevalence of 'justice' in all circumstances, even over religion such that even the killing of Muslims is made acceptable in the *Fatāwā*.[25] Barani's idea of *zawābit* [state laws] in his *Fatāwā* is a case in point we will return to in the next chapter. The success of justice was fundamental to the maintenance of royalty, over and above religion, for it was effective royal power that would ensure the hierarchies essential to the maintenance of social and other privileges.

As the Greek empire expanded, their 'splendour' being attributable as much to developed military techniques and altered social conditions and modes of production at the time,[26] they did not fail in their literatures to continue the articulation of an ideology

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[22] See the very interesting H. Frankfurt, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature*, Chicago, 1978.

[23] I have discussed this question from a slightly different angle in chapter 6.

[24] Dankoff, 'Introduction', pp. 5*ff.* and p. 269, *n.* 12; in later times such imagery allowed for the projection of ideal visions of kingship: cf., Monica Juneja, 'On the Margins of Utopia — One More Look at Mughal Painting', *The Medieval History Journal*, 4, 2, 2001, pp. 203-40.

[25] Mss fol. 146a; text, p. 200; trans., p. 292.

[26] See E.M. Wood, *Peasant-Citizen and Slave: The Foundations of Athenian Democracy*, London, 1988.

of royal sovereignty, now made more complicated by the incorporation of various ethnic, religious, racial, occupational, social and other groups into the subject population of the kingdom. No longer did all the subjects adhere to similar faiths; mental registers were multiple, and to ensure conviction, kingship now required further explication, and different, more universal, referents. Herodotus (I, 96 ff) [?485-?425 B.C.], in commenting on the Perso-Greek wars, went back to the rise of the Medes [from whom the Persians under Cyrus were descended]; the king's power was explained in rather different terms:

> The Median king Deioces first got a reputation for justice among his own people; then he manoeuvred to get himself appointed king. He proceeded to build his palace and establish his private guard; instituted court ceremonial; and administered justice from his new capital. He also sent out spies and secured a base of power for military operations, by which he expanded his kingdom through systematic conquest.[27]

By the time Alexander conquered Persia, the twin flows of royal ideology, one deriving from the ancient Near and Middle Eastern conception of divinity and prosperity, the other from being the logical outcome of the political realities of the present based on force and expansionism — represented in the classical Greek writings of Plutarch and Plato respectively — merged to allow for the formation of an institution which the world had not seen as yet, and which allowed Alexander to be written as 'the Great'.[28] Where advisory literature is concerned, it is interesting to note that in the introduction to his *Kitāb al-Sulṭān*, Ibn Qutayba — a Muslim jurist writing in the 8th century AD — mentions a letter of advice from Aristotle to Alexander: 'I have read a letter from Aristotle to Alexander ... [*waqārāt qitāb-i man arastātālīs 'alī alaksandar wafīye...*]', the underlying idea of which was that the ruler must aspire to make obedient his subjects by treating them with beneficence rather than oppression, 'since force can control only their bodies and not their minds'.[29] Implicit in this was the

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[27] Cited in Dankoff, 'Introduction', p. 6.
[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6; see also Dankoff's schematic arrangement of the 'three major strands in ancient political thought', namely justice, fortune and theocracy, *ibid.*, pp. 6-7.
[29] Dawood, 'Comparative Study', pp. 103*ff.* Dawood arguably refers to this as a 'pseudo-Aristotelian epistle', while Richter identifies this with Aristotle's tract 'On Kingship' which was available in Arabic at the time when Qutayba was writing; cf. G. Richter, *Studien zur Geschichte der Älteren Arabischen Fürtenspiegel*, Leipzig, 1932, p. 97, quoted in Dawood, *ibid.*

acknowledgement of the need to make royalty more acceptable so that the common people would [hopefully] not see as 'oppression' what was undoubtedly caused by military, political and economic realities; the reference is also important because in the [following] Sassanian and later Abbasid period, epistles [*andarz*] will emerge as an important *genre* of 'advice' documents.[30] The desire for the dual control of 'mind' and 'body' attributed to Greek political advice also apprehended the affirmation of the duality of religion and kingship as 'inseparable twins' in the Sassanian period, and an upsurge of the 'oppressed' groups!

The vast size of Alexander's empire may have been the very cause of its demise, but architecture, the arts, court ceremonials, insignias, and the prosperity attendant with a large empire consolidated the position of royal ideology as a secure foundation for a rigidly stratified society upon which later incumbents would build!

In A.D. 224, Ardashir wrested authority from the Greeks and, along with his priest Tansar, laid the foundations of the Sassanian empire: along with territorial sovereignty, religion was high on their agenda. Sassanian patronage to Zoroastrianism led to a re-efflorescence of both the religion and literature: their holy text, the *Avesta* — of which we possess only a fragment now — consisted, according to Parsi tradition, of 21 books in Sassanian times.[31] Religion provided one of the main arenas in which language flourished: the *Avesta* was translated into Pahlawi, and the *Zand* [commentary] on the *Avesta* was written in Pahlawi, as were various technical works on the doctrines, practices, and cosmogony of Magianism.[32]

With its capital in Ctesiphon, the Sassanian empire expanded in all directions; and its determination to rule effectively fundamentally altered the nature of its relationship with its component principalities. The population grew increasingly cosmopolitan, and [at least in the capital] the Arabs along with the Syrians and Armenians outnumbered the

[30] *EIr*, Vol. 2, pp. 11-16, s.v. 'andarz'.
[31] Levy, *Persian Literature*, pp. 9-10; Parsis are the 'cultured descendants of the Persian Zoroastrians who ... [fled] to India in the eighth century A.D. to escape the rigours of Islam', *ibid.*, p. 12.
[32] *Ibid.*, pp. 9-12; see also, Browne, *Literary History*. Other developments in the literary circles were longer-lasting, and undoubtedly more influential. The language of Persia, which Levy had earlier referred to as 'old Persian characters' had now developed into what would hereafter be called 'Pahlawi', perhaps a phonetic modification of 'Parthawi'/'Parthian'.

Persians themselves.[33] Architecture, commodities of luxury in the markets, and the sophistication and arrogance of the Persian nobility did not fail to impress those who thronged the city.[34] The contents of the *andarz* literature from this period asserts this vehemently. The Sassanian dynasty was undoubtedly the high-point of Persian civilisation, and the glory associated with the names of Ardashir, Anushirvan, Parviz, Buzurgmihr and the like would linger in Islamic literature even in the Delhi Sultanate.[35] In fact, Sassanian Persia supplied later writers *conceptually* with an ideal, and *actually*, with a great deal of literary material as well.[36]

There is a lot of 'secular' Pahlawi literature that has come down to us; what is of concern to this dissertation are those which deal with some aspect of political governance.

The *Yātkār-i Zarirān* ['The Memoirs of the Zarirs'], also called the *Shāhnāma-i Gushtāsp* ['The Epic of Gushtasp'], the *Kārnāmak-i Artākhshīr-i Pāpākan* ['The Book of Mighty Deeds of Ardashir, Son of Bābak'], the *'Ahd Ardashīr* ['Covenant'/'Testament'] of Ardashir [instituting the *andarz genre*], and a limited body of literature forms the corpus of political texts which have a direct bearing on later advice literature, especially the last which, according to A.H. Dawood, is the obvious and evident predecessor of the 'Mirrors for Princes' text which were to emerge later in Arabic and Persian.[37] Both the *Yātkār* and the *Kārnāmak* deal with legends/semi-legends and their heroic deeds — thus heralding, in content and partly in style — Firdausi's *Shāhnāma*. The use of a heroic figure as a locomotive in narratives is important; we will return to this question in our analysis of the *Fatawa*.

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33 Yarshater, 'Persian Presence', pp. 22-23.
34 S. Shaked, 'From Iran to Islam: On Some Symbols of Royalty', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 7, 1986, pp. 75-91.
35 Dawood, 'Comparative Study', p. 64; the names of Anushirvan, Khusrau Parviz, etc. appear consistently as metaphors in later Persian and Arabic 'Mirrors': for the Central Islamic lands, see Dawood, 'Comparative Study', pp. 64*ff*, where he argues that this was in part because the corpus of Pahlawi literature which acted as a model for later writings was small, and hence the same anecdotes, adages and maxims would get repeated over and over again through the centuries; for an example from the subcontinent, see Taj al-Din Hasan Nizami, *Tāj-al Ma'āthir*, trans. Bhagwat Saroop, *The Crown of Glorious Deeds*, Delhi, 1998.
36 Dawood, 'Comparative Study', p. 48.
37 Levy, *Persian Literature*, pp. 12-14; Dawood, *ibid.*, pp. 26-109.

The 'Covenant' of Ardashir — allegedly written by him to his son — itself has not survived, but translations of the original into Arabic [from the Abbasid period] show how, from the outset, religion was seen as essential to the stability of the government. The Persian monarch was the head of both religion and state and this would be followed through from beginning to end, from Ardashir to Anushirvan and Parviz, at least in the literatures.[38] Quoting from the 'Covenant', Ibn al-Muqaffa [considered to be the translator of the 'Covenant', by Dawood],[39] warns the ruler against irascibility, telling lies, avarice, malice, excessive anger and pleasure, supporting statements with oaths, and of the importance of counsel. Also known is the importance given to addressing the king, as different from addressing the common people, along with elaborate rules on court etiquette and behaviour, customs and usages.[40] Assertive hierarchy, was visible when the ruler was referred to as *al-malik al-Āzam* ['king of kings'/ 'great king'], while musicians and singers at court were divided into three categories, those from the lower ones being forbidden to perform with artists of the higher categories. Similarly, society was divided into four rigid classes — priests, warriors, husbandmen, artisans — and 'crossings', whether up or down, were viewed with alarm, so that it was considered the duty of the ruler to keep each of his subjects in proper place, an idea repeated often in the *Fatāwā*.[41]

In this textual practice of kingship, whilst religion and political rulership continued to be asserted as inseparable, 'proper judgement' became the new byword of good rule and was seen as ensuring prosperity, reflected in titles like 'rightly-guided king', 'happy king', and so on.[42] These titles indicate the increasing importance given to form and address, as also the complex relationships that were beginning to comprise polities, indicating the altered socio-political canvas; the Sassanian monarch required a hierarchised, elevated title because the tributary chiefs of the various provinces were

[38] Dawood, *ibid.*, pp. 50, 95, quotes both Muqaffa and Qutayba as confirming this idea for the Sassanians.
[39] Dawood, 'Comparative Study', p. 54.
[40] *Ibid.*, attributed the introduction of this system [on the basis of Muqaffa] to Ardashir, but it was most definitely not so forever after; note, for instance, that al-Walid ibn Abd al-Malik became the first ruler to forbid people to call him by his personal name, indicating the prevalence of the system till then.
[41] Interestingly, these rules of etiquette were not upheld by all Sassanian monarchs: for instance, in the case of court musicians, Haroun al-Rashid 'restored' this practice established originally by Ardashir, as Anushirvan 're-established' a lot of practices which had lapsed in-between! For a particular example, see Dawood, 'Comparative Study', pp. 57, 90, *n.* 6. The point of lapse of etiquette is also mentioned by al-Jahiz in his *Akhlāq al-Mulūk*; *ibid.*, pp. 67, 81, 98.
[42] See Dawood, 'Comparative Study', p. 68, *n.* 2. Since the Pahlawi documents are available only in Arabic translation, the actual titles used are unfortunately not extant.

called 'kings', and so the Sassanian monarch had to be 'king of kings'. Actual politico-economic relations thus contributed to the establishment of elaborately structured forms of behaviour, applicable from top to bottom, thus solidifying the hitherto unstructured base upon which political power had stood.[43] Interestingly, these hierarchies would smoothly flow into Islamic polities as well, despite Islam's textual denial of divisions amongst believers.

In its stead, the 'Covenant' initiated the birth of a new *genre* of epistolary writings in 'wisdom' literature which would not only metamorphose into a creative style by the time of the Abbasids, but would also give to later 'Mirrors' a fundamental component: *direct address* from the 'wise' to the novice![44] This would include within it multiple relationships, between advisor and king, king and prince, father and son, and [in *sūfī*sm] master and disciple![45] The emphasis was on the location of wisdom in the 'wise', 'people before us' [*al nās qablāna*], a term that included 'people' from times immemorial, but always in positions of 'rank' and 'authority'.[46] The *genre* of *andarz* literature would become particularly popular in the last century of Sassanian rule, with the monarch Anushirvan's famous *wazīr* Buzurgmihr writing an *andarz* at the king's behest, and the king Parviz writing a letter of advice to his son Shiroe.[47] Another *andarz* [available in Arabic in Ibn Miskawayh's collection of *adab* literature] is the *Jāwidān Khirad,* attributed to the ancient Persian king Hushang; according to Miskawayh, the text was kept in the Sassanian royal palace, and al-Turtushi described it as one of the best works the Persians had ever produced.[48]

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[43] Cf., as an example, Jenny Rose, 'Sasanian Splendor: The Appertunances of Royalty', in Stewart Gordon, ed., *Robes and Honor: The Medieval World of Investiture*, New York, 2001, pp. 35-56.

[44] Ardashir is known to have written another 'Covenant' addressed to the people; see Dawood, 'Comparative Study', p. 95, and *n.* 5.

[45] The suggestion is not that Sufi writings were influenced by *andarz* literature, but highlighting the literary style. On the 'Covenant' as a model for later works, see Dawood, 'Comparative Study', especially pp. 111-48.

[46] Dawood, *ibid.*, where he mentions that sources would often not mention anyone specifically, instead citing 'men of rank and wisdom', or 'Zoroastrian priests and men of authority'. Similarly, Barani often refers to 'wise men', 'men of wisdom', etc.; the historicity of the texts quoted as 'sources' in the *Fatāwā* are discussed in Habib and Khan, *Political Theory*, Appendix B.

[47] Dawood, *ibid.*, pp. 94-95ff. On Buzurgmihr and Anushirvan see below; Parviz advises his son particularly on the appointment of tax-collectors [amongst other things], undoubtedly indicating the fraught relations that the Sassanian empire had especially with the Arab provinces in the Hijaz at the time. See Yarshater, 'Persian Presence', p. 30, where he mentions 'a number of quarrels, battles, and the killings that resulted from the imposition of taxes on recalcitrant [Arab] tribes.'

[48] Dawood, *ibid.*, pp. 30, *n.* 1, 96-97; on Turtushi, whose *Sirāj al-Mulūk* is considered an exemplary Arabic 'Mirrors', see *ibid.*, pp. 167-98; also 'Janusz Danecki, 'Social Functions of Adab Literature. The

But undoubtedly, the most famous Sassanian monarch was Anushirvan, and his wise *wazīr* Buzurgmihr, both of whom find frequent mention in the *Fatāwā*. The image of Anushirvan, as it appears from later texts, is one of a shining example of wisdom and justice, once again underlining the combination of judgement with justness. So great is his image of justness, that al-Ghazali [writing in the court at Ghazni much later] quotes a Prophetic tradition: 'I was born in the reign of the Just King', i.e., Anushirvan. Along with Buzurgmihr, whose own life and works remain mysterious and unclear, Anushirvan set about restoring the traditions of etiquette and comportment which Ardashir had instituted; it is said that he was particularly interested in history, and in the writings of Ardashir.[49] It is interesting to note that the greatness of Anushirvan in later Islamic writings is often qualified by citing his ruthlessness in suppressing the religiously 'recalcitrant' *zindiq*s [Mazdakites], his tirelessness in restoring religious orthodoxy, and perpetuating a social rigidity and conservatism; Goldziher believes that one of the influences of the 'glorious' Sassanians on later Islamic empires was intolerance towards other religious groups, their harsh view towards unbelievers, considering them as ritually unclean,[50] thus fundamentally reformulating the definition of 'just' political rule in the world.

What the Sassanians had achieved was a stability which derived from military exploits and efficiency [like the Greeks before them], but also a magnificence [deriving in part from the ideas of divinity of the Achaemenids] which engendered a new socio-political subject-order upon which autocratic political rule could be inscribed more confidently. The reign of the Sassanian monarchs, based as it was on a combination of religious and royal sovereignty, was firmly established in the traditions of the region. Stable governance, accompanied by evident social and material splendour had solidified society into a grid-structure adorned with ceremonials which would only barely be touched, in real terms, by the 'brotherhood' of the new faith. And literature had played a fundamental role in the transmission of these 'etiquettes', *andarz* becoming the prototype for later writings on *adab*; to summarise Tarif Khalidi, Sassanian

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Example of Al-Mubarrad's Al-Kāmil fī l-adab', in M. Fleischhammer, hrsgv., *Arabische Sprache und Literatur im Wandel*, Halle, 1979, pp. 84-91.

[49] Dawood, 'Comparative Study', pp. 97-100.

magnificence lay in their institutionalising the monarchic principle and perfecting the art of governance, and it was their political 'wisdom' which sustained that greatness.[51] What came hereafter built on this foundation.

Since the *Hijrah,* when Muhammad — having gained prophethood in the meantime — moved to Medina, 'Islam' would act as the primary well-spring to achieve political ends, the mobilisation of aggressors never having achieved such fervour before. The history of that period is too well-known to be mentioned;[52] suffice to say that despite its novelty, and the confidence and aggression with which political Islam was to expand hereafter, many ideas and actions revealed either influence or progression of Sassanian ideas of dominance. To start with, not only was Muhammad the prophet but also the governor of Medina. His position, at least in his lifetime, included a number of roles which he performed simultaneously; ruler, religious leader, jurist, warrior. And the consolidation and spread of Islam, both religious and political, was accompanied by the rise of the Arabs as the 'superior' race, and of their language as the purest one, such that the *Qur'ān* could be read and ritual prayers said *only* in Arabic across the Islamic domains for centuries thereafter.[53]

But this did not mean, as many have misapprehended, that the social phenomenon of Islam in Arabia was uninfluenced by its surroundings; what was important was that assimilation in Islam [vis-à-vis the non/pre-Islamic] worked broadly within the paradigm of what Goldziher has called 'the two forms of *borrowing* and *reaction*'.[54] In *Qur'ān*ic traditions, the prophet's ascent to Heaven itself is comparable to the heavenly journeys in pre-Islamic Iranian tradition, that of Arda Viraz being the best-known.[55] Other derivative notions include those regarding cleanliness and pollution, recitation of

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[50] Quoted in Yarshater, 'Persian Presence', p. 33, and *n.* 134, citing a Zoroastrian text *Sad dar-i nathr*, according to which 'it is necessary to make an effort so as to abstain from (using) the same cup as a man of different religion (*jud dēn*).'
[51] Tarif Khalidi, *Islamic Historiography: The Histories of Mas'ūdī*, Albany, 1975, pp. 90-91.
[52] The list of works on the subject are inexhaustable; for quick reference see Timothy Insoll, *The Archaeology of Islam*, Oxford, 1999; Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vols 1 & 2; W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca*, Karachi, 1953; *idem, Muhammad at Medina*, Karachi, 1956; Martin Lings, *Muhammad: His Life based on the Earliest Sources*, Cambridge, 1983; Paul Wheatley, *The Places Where Men Pray Together: Cities in Islamic Lands, Seventh through the Tenth Centuries*, Chicago, 2001; Oleg Garbar, *The Formation of Islamic Art*, 1973, rev. and enlarged edn, New Haven, 1987.
[53] See Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, p. 28*f.*
[54] I. Goldziher, 'Islamisme et parisisme', *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, 43, 1901, p. 7, quoted in Yarshater, 'Persian Presence', p. 33 ; emphasis in original.
[55] *EIr*, Vol. 2, pp. 356-57.

religious texts for the peace of the departed soul [prominent particularly amongst the Shias], the weighing of good and evil deeds on the Day of Judgement; at the more everyday level, the importance of the toothbrush, the prohibition against walking with one shoe, and of urinating while standing. Traditions could also come up as a reaction, such that the dog, considered sacred in Mazdaism, would become ritually unclean in Islam.[56] Further, ideas about resurrection, millenarian and Messianic belief, the catastrophic end of the world, gnosticism, etc. are also traceable to contact [of the Arabs] with Persia, as also with Zoroastrianism, post-exhilic Judaism and [to a lesser extent] Christianity.[57]

The geographical expanse of the Sassanian empire allowed for physical mobility of peoples from one region to another, and increased military activity ensured this further; and such people, with the coming of Islam, were possible channels through which Persian/Sassanian ideas would be transmitted to the Arabs.[58] Ideas of governance and administrative organisation — in which the Sassanians had excelled — remained despite being annexed by the Arabs, the capital Ctesiphon [now called al-Madain] being an example in particular. Since the Arabs themselves had no expertise in such matters, they often replaced the top layer of Sassanian officials but retained the earlier landed gentry [*dehqāns*] to help them manage the affairs of the state.[59] Sassanian 'splendour', visible in palaces, temples, other architectural monuments, sculptures, administrative and governmental mechanics and literary works, surrounded Arabic Islam everywhere in their immediate vicinity; and given the meagre resources of the new but rapidly spreading Islamic domains, it was both natural and sensible that they should build on the pre-existing apparatus.

While pre-Islamic cultural civilisations could thus be considered a 'natural source to comparable Islamic ideas',[60] it should not, however, suggest the absence of any hostility

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56 Alessandro Bausani maintains that 'the essence of the Koranic passage lies precisely in the concept of primordial choice which ... is so typically Iranian [i.e., pre-Islamic].' Cf. Yarshater, 'Persian Presence', p. 37 and *passim* for further details and examples.

57 Cf., Yarshater, *ibid.*, for a general review of pre-Islamic influences on the development of Islam; and Aziz al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship: Power and the Sacred in Muslim, Christian and the Pagan Polities*, London, pbk edn 2001.

58 Such as the *Abnā'* in Yemen; cf., Yarshater, 'Persian Presence', p. 27.

59 *Ibid.*, p. 54 and *passim*.

60 S. Shaked, 'Some Iranian Themes in Islamic Literature: Recurrent Patterns in Iranian Religions: From Mazdaism to Sufism', *Studia Iranica*, 11, 1992, p. 145.

towards them. This was perhaps best exemplified in the force with which the Arabic language was propagated at the cost of Pahlawi/Persian on the one hand, and on the development of Arabic literary and other forms of culture in the first 150-odd years after the birth of Islam. One reason was that Arabic language had been growing slowly in principalities of the erstwhile Sassanian empire, and it was in these areas that Persian influence was relatively veiled.[61]

The period of the 'rightly-guided' caliphs and the first political dynasty of Islam, the Umayyads, were marked by this aggressive Arab chauvinism.[62] This is most evident in the development of literatures of the time: the assertion of Arab identity as supreme led to the identification of everything prior to them as ignorant, *jāhiliyya*, and a new *genre* of 'historical' writings delineating the coming of the Prophet inserted a new birth and chronology [the *Hijri* calendar, for instance] in the trajectory of literatures of the region. Arabic literature, 'historical' writings in particular [a discussion of which is unfortunately not possible over here], became one of the most important arenas in which their identity could be codified and articulated as *separate* from earlier ones.[63] Towards that end, Hadith provided an 'epistemic umbrella' and chief vehicle for the establishment of veracity in history-writing, characterised as they were by genealogical and dynastic, imperial histories. But the conservatism of the Hadith, the widespread practice of 'shariah-mindedness', and the increasing tendency on the part of the *'ulamā* to solidify these made it more and more difficult for further histories to be composed: new styles and *genres* needed to be born.[64]

There are very few writings from the period which may be associated with the development of the 'Mirrors for Princes' *genre*, but some *risāla* [epistles] and *waṣīyya* [testaments] that have survived through later writings provide interesting insights into the history of ideas that went into the making of this *genre*. One of the reasons for the aggressivism of the Umayyads was that they were competing with the Alids, supporters

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61 Urbanisation was one factor which promoted the growth of Arabic; see Yarshater, 'Persian Presence', p. 25.
62 For this period see Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, Vol. 1; Wilferd Madelung, *The Succession to Muhammad: A Study of the Early Caliphate*, Cambridge, 1997; Gerald H. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam: The Umayyad Caliphate, AD 661-750*, London, 1986.
63 Cf., Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, Vol. 1, pp. 359-472; Tarif Khalidi, *Arab Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, 1994, rpt Cambridge, 1997, chapter 1; Donner, *Narrative of Islamic Origins*.
64 Khalidi, *ibid.*, pp. 17-82; Dawood, 'Comparative Study', pp. 15-16.

of the Prophet's son-in-law and the fourth caliph. The religious establishment therefore saw the Umayyads as forcible occupiers; in turn, the Umayyads based their rule on Arabism and a demonstration of power. They were thus more 'Arab' rulers rather than rulers of the Muslim 'community' and the documents of the time reflect this.

Of particular interest to us is an epistle written by Abd al-Hamid [a friend of Muqaffa] who is credited with establishing a new convention in Arabic epistolary literature where, according to William Marçais, he transformed the epistle from a short discourse on practical issues, perhaps a series of moral sermons or sagacious counsel, to a document with a more general applicability covering new subjects.[65] Written in the name of the last Umayyad caliph for the guidance of his son who was leading an expedition against the Kharijites rebellion in Iraq in 129 AH, Hamid's epistle provides a mature blend of pre-Islamic notions of manners and etiquette with Islamic and Arab priorities of strategic military administration.[66] It has a distinct and clear Islamic tone, exhorting the prince to a rigorous daily routine of worship and recitation of the *Qur'ān* even during battle. Amongst other things, he is asked to be balanced in his temperament and judgement, and pay special attention to the welfare of those of noble birth; in fact, according to Dawood, Hamid is possibly the first person to coin a phrase for the high-born in Arabic literature, *ahl-i buyūtāt al-sharāf*.[67] As in the *Fatāwā*, nobility of birth was important not just as a prerequisite for army leaders but also as a criterion for the bestowal of favours by the prince.

Another interesting epistle is supposedly written by Tahir ibn al-Husayn, governor of Khurasan, to his son Abd Allah, when the latter was made governor of Egypt in AH 206. Dealing once again with the immanent military scenario [Abd Allah was also entrusted with suppression of the Kharijite rebellion in these provinces], his epistle underplays the Arab element and focuses more on Islamic teachings and political wisdom. Most of the subjects are similar to the ones in Hamid's epistle [and the

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65 William Marçais, *Les Origines de la Prose Littéraire Arabe*, Alger, 1927, p. 11; Dawood, 'Comaparative Study', p. 113, *n.* 2.
66 See Dawood, 'Comparative Study', pp. 117-30; S.D. Goitein, 'A Turning Point in the History of the Muslim State (Apropos of Ibn al-Muqaffa''s *Kitāb aṣ-Ṣaḥābā*', *Islamic Culture*, 23, 3, 1949, pp. 120-35.
67 Dawood, *ibid.*, p. 125.

Fatāwā], the importance of noble birth,[68] the fault of being intoxicated with power, etc.; but of equal interest was the attention drawn to the welfare of the subjects, on ways to improve the livelihood of the subjects, recommendations for the poor and the disabled, hospitals for the poor, etc.[69]

Finally, there were the literary/political testaments [*waṣīyyas*], a *genre* that had been in existence in pre-Islamic times as well but only in poetic form. The complicated development of political Islam at this time, with the simultaneous need to rule effectively was reflected in the varying attitudes that emerged in some of these writings. Apart from the demonstrable Islamic tone of these testaments and the wider field that they covered in comparison to their pre-Islamic counterparts, an interesting attitude towards the expanding political empire is reflected in a *waṣīyya* of Umar, the second orthodox caliph and one of Muawiyah, the Umayyad caliph. As related by the historian Tabari, Umar, positioned as the ruler of a still nascent Islamic *dār*,[70] identified the components of the empire by their religious status:

1. *ansār,* 'helpers', the people of Medina who helped the Prophet when he arrived from Mecca;
2. Arabs, whom he called the 'core of Islam';
3. *dhimmā*, the non-Muslims entitled to live conditionally in the Muslim community.[71]

The testament of Muawiyah to his son Yazid, concerned as he was with the continuation of Umayyad rule and opening the way to the caliphate for his son, in fact warned him against certain members of the Quraysh tribe whom he feared may rise in revolt against

[68] He uses the term *ahrār al-nās* (free-born people), plural of *ḥurr* (free), perhaps as a translation of the Pahlawi word *azād* which when added to *mard* (man) came to denote a person of noble birth, *azād-mard*, or its Arabic derivation *azād mardīyya*; cf., Dawood, *ibid.*, p. 138.
[69] For Tahir's epistle, see C. E. Bosworth, 'An Early Arabic Mirror for Princes: Tahir Dhu l-Yaminain's Epistle to His Son Abdallah (206/821), *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 29, 1970, pp. 25-41; Dawood, *ibid.*, pp. 130-41. The importance of the common man is also highlighted in a letter allegedly written by Ali, the fourth orthodox caliph, in 35-41 AH. wherein he urges the governor of Egypt not only to treat them with justice but also to try and please them. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
[70] Steingass, *Dictionary*, s.v. 'dār', pp. 495-96.
[71] al-Tabari, *Tārīkh al-Umām wa'l-Mulūk*, Cairo, n.d., Vol. 5, pp. 12-13; Dawood, 'Comparative Study', p. 153. For the *Dhimma*, who will also interest us in Barani's *Fatāwā*, see also A.S.Tritton, *The Caliph and Their Non-Muslim Subjects: A Critical Study of the Covenant of 'Umar*, London, 1930; and Bat Ye'or, *The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians under Islam*, rev. and enlarged trans. D. Maisel, P. Fenton and D. Littman, Rutherford, 1985.

him. His perspective was obviously different from that of Umar, and this was reflected in his three-fold division of the Islamic domains not by religious status but by region:

1. people of Iraq;
2. people of the Hijaz;
3. people of Syria.[72]

Certain important practices from pre-Islamic times were adapted as well, ostensibly to enhance royal ideology: some Umayyad rulers observed Persian customs at meals compatible with Arab traditions of generosity, members of the royal entourage were expected to follow Sassanian horse-riding etiquette, and al-Hallaj, the feared governor of Iraq used to wear a *qalansuwa*, the Persian headgear.[73] As the Umayyad dynasty progressed, they were becoming increasingly aware of the impossibility of political rule purely on religious principles, howsoever strong the voice of the *'ulamā* may have been.

But the obvious preference for Arabs/Arabic at the cost of Persian showed itself in the anti-Arab *Shu'ubiyya* movement, the literary aspect of which was represented almost exclusively by the Persians: their influence on the growth of Arabic literature was to be dominant and profound, and they borrowed heavily from Pahlawi prototypes. This would come to maturation in the next political phase, that of the Abbasids.[74]

The arrival of the Abbasids has sometimes been explained as a 'revolution', representing, as it did, social 'unrest' with political rule; this is obviously related to the manner in which they acquired political power.[75] The Abbasids not only needed to legitimise their political ascension to power, but also differentiate themselves from the Umayyads. The role of the Persians in the rise of the Abbasids to power is well-known; also, most caliphs from the early Abbasid period were born of Persian mothers.[76] The genealogy of Sassanian Iran, and the re-emergence of Persian literature [which had suffered somewhat due to lack of patronage in Umayyad times] was to rise to meet this demand, along with a new *genre* of writings in Arabic and Persian, *adab*.

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[72] Tabari, *ibid.*, pp. 179-80; Dawood, *ibid.*, p. 154.
[73] al-Jahiz, *Kitāb al-Tāj*, pp. 14, 55-56; Dawood, *ibid.*, p. 79.
[74] For a list of names of those who played a prominent part in this movement, see Dawood, 'Comparative Study', p. 36.
[75] For political details of the rise of the Abbasids, see Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, Vol. 1, p. 285*f.*

Thus, political consolidation moved once step backwards, and one step forwards, and another historical phase in the development of Persian literature was begun. The 'backward' step was a partial return to Sassanian traditions of absolute sovereign splendour and social order, dictated in part by the need to draw a line between them and the Umayyads: what better way to seek legitimacy than to present a royal ideology which drew upon political sovereignty predating that of their immediate predecessors. The 'forward' step, interestingly, was in part a result of this perceived need to go 'backwards', and in part to create a more secure and potent ideological capital which would enable the dynasty to overcome serious, temporary setbacks. Simple assertion of religion by the ruling classes in a increasingly stratified society had not prevented the fall of the Umayyads; rulers/elites [beneficiaries of rulers as they were] needed to ensure the maintenance of social order as the basis of absolute power. Marshall Hodgson's observations apprehending this need is quoted here at some length:

> ... absolutism depended not on sheer military might but on cultural expectations which could legitimize it ... [and] required habits of mind that would lead people to look to its restoration if it fell on hard times .... For maintaining such habits of mind, the absolutism could depend but little on the grudging recognition afforded it by the the Shar'î 'ulamâ[.] It must depend heavily on the attitude of a large class of officials and bureaucrats, together with wider strata of landowners and even rich merchants from whom the officials were drawn .... Their culture can be summed up under the heading *adab*, the pattern of cultivated living which grew up around the court and in the provincial centres and was imitated yet more widely. It was in this culture that must be found those enduring *patterns of expectation* which could give solid support for the absolutist tradition, independent of the limitations imposed on it by Sharî'ah-mindedness.[77]

If the preservation of political [and attendant social] power was required, *adab* was seen as one well-spring for it. But there was more to it than Hodgson's quote highlights: if the literature of the time, especially the writings of Muqaffa are an index, *adab* could be

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[76] Dawood, 'Comparative Study', p. 80.
[77] Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, Vol. 1, pp. 444-45; emphasis mine; I discuss the importance of the 'city' in the *Fatāwā* in chapter 6.

regarded as a synonym of *sunna* with the sense of habit, hereditary norm of conduct, and custom derived from ancestors; further, in situating it as a need of the privileged, it identified intellect and ethics with social meaning and appearance, perpetuating a new form of differentiation which could only be circumvented by imitation, thus, in turn, perpetuating the order itself. Socio-political heterogeneity and recalcitrance was sought to be contained through imitative behaviour, a sophistication which engendered lateral association and carried with it the impression of social acceptance, cohesion and mobility.

Interestingly, this emphasis on cultivable categories like courteousness, sophistication, refinement and the like, buoyed as they were by the promise of access to privilege, perhaps inadvertently touched upon another idea central to the Islamic faith: *jihād*. The *Baḥr al-Favā'id*, a mid-12th century 'Mirrors' begins with and 'devotes more attention to the "greater *jihād*," the holy war against man's "internal enemy," the soul, than to warfare against the "external enemy," the infidel.'[78] Such an inclination, undoubtedly transmitted through literary traditions, perhaps amplified the transformations that *adab* underwent in the early Abbasid period: from being 'strictly national ... contact with foreign cultures widened the contents of *adab*. It came to include a knowledge of those sections of non-Arabic [Indian, Iranian, Hellenistic] literature which found entry into Arabo-Islamic civilization from the early 'Abbasid period onward.'[79] The development of a multi-racial Muslim society governed by a caliph, and the end of purely Arab rule characterised the new Arabic literature of this period; a similar struggle, complicated far more because of the presence of a large body of non-Muslims in the subcontinent, pervades the *Fatāwā* to which we will return in chapter 4.

Dawood's meticulous study of advice literature highlights the complex manner in which Sassanian and Hellenistic 'wisdom' regarding the practice of sovereignty appeared in a more mature and strident form in the Abbasid period. Literature of this period that led to

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[78] Julie Scott Meisami, trans, ed., and annotated, *The Sea of Precious Virtues (Baḥr al-Favā'id): A Medieval Islamic Mirror for Princes*, Salt Lake City, 1991, pp. xiii, 13-35; and *ibid.*, pp. xii-xvii for the uses and influence of earlier sources on the text.
[79] *EI2*, Vol. 1, pp. 175-76, s.v. 'Adab', ; also, see De Lacy O'Leary, *How Greek Science Passed to the Arabs*, New Delhi, rpt 2001; Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbāsid Society (2nd-4th/8th-10th centuries)*, 1998, rpt, London, 1999; and for the development of forms of beauty, Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Beauty in Arabic*

the rise of 'Mirrors for Princes' were of two sorts in the main: *adab*, attributed to Ibn al-Muqaffa, and epistolary styles, for which credit goes to Abd al-Hamid. Muqaffa himself was a Persian by origin and culture, and knew both Arabic and Persian very well.[80] He was therefore well-qualified to play the role of intermediary; and his knowledge of Pahlawi sources ensured the transmission of many Sassanian ideas.[81]

What we find in his *Ādāb al-Kabīr* — the first and second parts of which may be regarded as the first 'Mirrors for Princes' written in Arabic — is not only a reassertion of the pre-Islamic belief of the inseparability of religion and kingship in the execution of prosperous sovereignty, but a more detailed enumeration of requisite sophistication, and its need in society at large. While for modern scholars Muqaffa's work is indispensable to access Pahlawi material [albeit in Arabic translation], at that time, his works owed their success 'not only to their incontestable merit and the novelty of their subject-matter, but also to their alien form.'[82] From the outset, the text leans on the wisdom of the 'ancients': they were like 'affectionate fathers' who recorded their wisdom for the benefit of their children.[83] 'All that the limited aptitude of the contemporary world was equal to was to deal with fine distinctions and subtle notions derived from the more substantial wisdom of the ancients.'[84] The first *adab* text had thus located, in no uncertain terms, the superiority of the 'ancients', and successors only needed to adapt and refine them. However, the altered political realities of the time were addressed as well; while Muqaffa's primary concern remained 'splendour', stability of rule was sought in 'judgement', a quality which when gained in right measure would ensure monarchical dominance and stratified social order. In one summation, he says:

Culture, 1998, Princeton, 1999, and Shirley Guthrie, *Arab Social Life in the Middle Ages: An Illustrated Study*, London, 1995, especially pp. 55-87.

[80] The bilingualism of intellectuals of the time was no uncommon feature; see Yarshater, 'Persian Presence', pp. 6-13 for the dominant position that the Persians held under the Abbasids.

[81] See Dawood, 'Comparative Study', pp. 61-109 for translated material from Pahlawi to Arabic.

[82] See Dawood, *ibid.*, chap. 2; the 'alien form' refers to the large-scale translation of Pahlawi material which made the *Adab* a medley of literally translated and freely adapted passages lacking coherence and smoothness; also, sometimes ideas derived from Sassanian traditions were blindly presented, such as al-Jāḥiz, *Kitāb al-Tāj*, while elaborating on the king's duties mentions the 'purification of fire temples' which was an obvious reference to the Sassanian/Zoroastrian relationship but had no contemporary relevance. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

[83] Barani's use of the 'father-son' motif as a literary device is discussed in chapter 5.

[84] Dawood, 'Comparative Study', p. 48.

All the ruler needs in this world is two kinds of judgement: judgement with which his authority is strengthened, and that with which he is adorned in the eyes of the people.[85]

Further, he divided 'government' into three kinds, of which the one based on religion was deemed most appropriate: in such a system, people submitted to authority in the name of religion, because they saw the requisite social and political obligations [much like the Achaemenids] as a demand made by their inner calling to religion. There were obvious resonances of Ardashir's oft-quoted maxim on the inseparability and mutual guardianship of religion and kingship: whichever one had no defender was bound to be defeated! But Muqaffa went one step further, placing religion above the king, and presenting the latter as being in service of the former. At a time when political rulers were caliphs of the faith as well, this was a tactical qualification![86] Further, the vast imperial domains required an efficient bureaucracy, a dependable army, and closer to home, good counsel; needless to say, only those well-qualified to give counsel should be allowed to do so! The social implication of this advice, couched in 'proper judgement' essential to the maintenance of royal splendour and the prosperity of the people, becomes clearer from the following statement:

It is the duty of the ruler to investigate the trifling affairs of the people ... . He should investigate particularly the poverty of the good and the noble ... and the transgression of the low.... He should have fear of the hungry nobleman and the rich man of low birth, for the nobleman attacks when he is hungry and the man of low birth when he is satisfied.[87]

Thus, where the ruler was concerned, his connections with Sassanian [and earlier] traditions were clear, emboldened by the literature of the time. These connections were visible in reality with the famous Barmakid family serving as the *wazīr*s under Haroun al-Rashid [*r*. 786-809], and in contemporary writings as well, most notably of al-Jahiz

[85] al-Muqaffa, *Al-Ādāb al-Saghīr wa-l-Ādāb al-Kabīr*, p. 69; Dawood, *ibid.*, p. 48. It derives also from the Zoroastrian tenet of *paymān* which 'distinguishe[d] Iran most perfectly from all other peoples and cultures', and the Aristotelian idea of the 'mean' which seeks to strike a balance between 'deficiency' and 'excess': for example, Muqaffa, *ibid.*, p. 64, using the Arabic term *qaṣd*, advises the king against excessive talking or greeting, 'for excess in them belongs to foolishness, and deficiency belongs to arrogance.' Cf., Yarshater, 'Persian Presence', p. 43, and Dawood, 'Comparative Study', p. 55, *n*. 2.
[86] See Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam*, Cambridge, pbk edn 2003, as an introduction .
[87] Muqaffa, *Al-Ādāb*, p. 67; Dawood, 'Comparative Study', p. 57. The prosperity of the people based on proper judgement of the ruler is a constant motif in the *Fatāwā*, although [interestingly] in some instances Barani actually forbids the ruler from taking his enquiries too far [discussed in chapter 5].

whose treatise on the censure of secretaries, *Kitāb dhamm akhlāq al-kuttāb*, drew an eloquent and sardonic picture of the 'intellectuals' of the time with their clearly Persian orientation and disdain of Arab traditions and literary virtues.[88] It is useful to add over here that almost all of these concerns would be present in Barani's *Fatāwā*; and, very interestingly, Barani also translated an Arabic text of the history of the Barmakid family into Persian, the reasons for which have never been known.

The other text which should be mentioned briefly is al-Jahiz's *Kitāb al-Tāj*, which draws heavily from Pahlawi sources, and gives an impressive picture of court etiquette, ceremonials, customs, etc.[89] He is clear in saying that these rules were important and therefore needed to be made known since many did not possess it at the time; it is interesting to note that he mentions no sources directly except the 'Covenant' of Ardashir, and the *Kalīlā wa Dimnā*, a translation of the Indian 'tales of wisdom', the *Pañcatantra*. His emphasis, too, is clearly on continuity:

> Let us begin with the [pre-Islamic] Persian kings since they are the first herein, and it is from them that we adopted the canons of sovereignty and kingship, of the classification of the noble and the common, of the administration of [the affairs of] the people, and the limitation of each class to its just position and its proper place.[90]

A number of topics were elaborated in great detail, and new ones added in these texts, bringing them closer to what was to emerge immediately afterwards as proper 'Mirrors'. These included, for instance in the *Kitāb al-Tāj*, proper conduct of different classes of people in various contexts [in court, in royal audience, at meals, those of boon companions], enumeration of royal prerogatives, training of a royal envoy, celebration of festivals, terminations of feasts, rules on sleeping, dressing, use of perfume, frugality in times of emergency, etc.; and in Ibn Qutayba's *Kitāb al-Sulṭān*, they were drawn from a broader pool, Indian, Greek, Islamic and biblical, and were included in 10 chapters entitled 'Ruler', 'War', 'Nobility', 'Natural Disposition', 'Science', 'Asceticism', 'Friendship', 'Human Needs', 'Food', and 'Women', along with passages on drinking

[88] See Yarshater, 'Persian Presence', pp. 70-71.
[89] Amongst other things, see the commonality of the 'ceremonial metalanguage of robing' in Dominique Sourdel, 'Robes of Honor in 'Abbasid Baghdad During the Eighth to Eleventh Centuries', in Gordon, ed., *Robes and Honor*, pp. vii, 137-45.

habits, knowledge, poetry and the interpretation of dreams. Also included was advice on the choice of secretaries, provincial governors and tax collectors, on the importance of counsel, the advantages and disadvantages of keeping and disclosing secrets, the working of justice, evidence and punishments, the need and importance of the ruler's seclusion from the public, procedures of pardon, forms of address, etc.[91]

But perhaps the most interesting element to be added was completely unexpected. Muqaffa, in his second part of the *Ādāb al-Kabīr* [discussed earlier] included a section on the proper conduct of the ruler's associates. Although seemingly in keeping with the perpetuation of royal splendour and class society, a default reading of the text actually presented a completely different, darker picture of the king. He was presented as an arrogant despot, his whims were laws, and his service 'so perilous that it becomes a bitter experience for which there is no remedy but lasting perseverance without complaint'. In underlining the importance of faith that the associates must possess, Muqaffa forbade them to criticise the king, and urged them to applaud their good tendencies 'so that they might take root in him and overcome the bad ones'. It is interesting to point out that while addressing the king, Muqaffa used the term *mulūk* [governor, ruler], but while addressing the associates, he used the term *walī* [kings], to capture both the hierarchy and the grimness of courtly occupation.[92] Advice on politics, at least in Muqaffa, was relatively thin on justice, emphasising more on judgement instead; in the *Fatāwā*, this distinction would often get blurred and perhaps more 'humanised' in that judgement and justice were seen to be similar expressions of the ruler.

Thus, the literary canvas for the articulation of royal ideology had, in Abbasid times, come to cover almost every visible and perceptible aspect of the king and subject's comportment and performance in the public, socio-political domain. It had absorbed many Sassanian and earlier traditions, and gone much further. Direct speech with the audience, charactersitic of Sassanian *andarz* literatures and Umayyad *risāla* and *waṣīyya*, had become one hallmark of these literatures. Yet, their overemphasis on

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[90] al-Jahiz, *Kitāb al-Tāj*, p. 23; see Dawood, 'Comparative Study', p. 66*f* for further details and debates regarding this text.
[91] Dawood, 'Comparative Study', pp. 73-74, 84-85; see also John C. Lamoreaux, *The Early Muslim Tradition of Dream Interpretation*, Albany, 2002.
[92] Dawood, *ibid.*, pp. 59-61.

Pahlawi/Persian translations and the compulsive urge to refer to earlier traditions did not let a coherent, organic text emerge, and the stress on social refinement as political comportment often led to cursory and superficial treatment of topics [as in Qutayba's *Kitāb al-Sulṭān*] restricting their utility as effective political treatises in an expanding, volatile polity [keeping them at the level of *adab* literature, or proto-'Mirrors']. It stopped them from emerging as an independent, literary *genre* clearly identifiable as political 'advice', *naṣīhat.* This was to appear slightly later, but in the Abbasid period itself, effected in large measure by the expansion and assimilation of court officials, mostly Iranians, involved in *tadbīr* [administration] and *adab*: according to Goldziher, 'they had only to transfer their inherited religious sense into Islamic idiom',[93] trained as they were in the sophistication of Sassanian administration, investing their energies in their regained prominence in the new political dispensation. 'One illustration of this assimilation is the subsequently developing literary genre of "mirrors for princes," with its antecedents in the Persian *andarznāmas*, books of counsel.'[94]

All these ideas, centred as they were around the person of the king and the act of governance, flowing from many sources, finally led to the emergence of 'Mirrors for Princes', a genre that has no synonym in either Arabic [*naṣīhā*] or Persian [*naṣīhat*, pl. *nasā'iḥ*].[95] In the Arabic language, al-Turtushi's *Sirāj al-Mulūk*,[96] and in Persian al-Ghazali's *Naṣīhat al-Mulūk* represented the classical phase of such texts.[97]

Soon, normative and didactic texts became one of the principal creations of royal patronage, and as urbanisation, trade and territory grew, and peoples and institutions multiplied, such texts became ever more useful in articulating hegemonic power, and inscribing political authority. Sufism, the 'mystical dimension of Islam' came to be incorporated in this discourse as well, for [at least in the Delhi Sultanate] it would provide Islamic political rule with the most important ideological challenge. Elsewhere

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93 I. Goldziher, *Muhammadanische Studien*, 2 vols, Halle, 1889-90; trans, S.M. Stern and C.R. Barber, ed., S.M. Stern, *Muslim Studies*, London, 1967-71, Vol. 2, pp. 59-60; Yarshater, 'Persian Presence', p. 12.
94 *EIr*, Vol. 1, pp. 89-95, s.v. 'Abbasid Caliphate', p. 91; Yarshater, 'Persian Presence', p. 58.
95 As a general introduction, see Ann K.S. Lambton, 'Islamic Mirrors for Princes', in *idem, Theory and Practice in Medieval Persian Government,* London, 1980, pp. VI: 419-42.
96 See Dawood, 'Comparative Study', pp. 167-98.
97 For easy reference Dawood, *ibid.*, pp. 233-69; also Ann K.S. Lambton, 'The Theory of Kingship in the *Naṣīhat ul-Mulūk* of Ghazālī', *The Islamic Quarterly*, 1, 1, 1954, pp. 47-55; Patricia Crone, 'Did al-Ghazālī write a Mirror for Princes? On the Authorship of *Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk*', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 10, 1987, pp. 167-91.

too this may have held true; the 11th century *Wisdom of Royal Glory* written in proto-Turkish in the Karakhanid kingdom in Kashghar in AD 1069, and *The Sea of Precious Virtues*, written in Syria between 1159-62, both included long discussions on Sufism. But inasmuch as the *genre* had moved far beyond the rock inscriptions of the Achaemenids asserting the position of the ruler as the shadow of God, the organising tension remained much the same: the ever-more complex relationship between 'religion' and 'kingship'. Most of the themes touched upon here appear in the *Fatāwā* in some form or the other, sometimes in identical ways and sometimes in just the reverse!

As political Islam expanded in all directions and incorporated ever-more variant peoples, ideas and cultures, as well as internal developments like Sufism, these literatures struggled to synchronise the variety of diverse political dispensations and its demands on the one hand, and simultaneously embody the principle ethics and etiquettes that the homogenous faith of Islam had imbibed in its long journey from *jahiliyya* to Ghazna! Its everlasting rendition would be in the all-time great Persian Book of Kings, the *Shāhnāma*, which Firdausi was to present to the court of the new, assertive, mighty empire of the Ghaznavids, one ruler of which, Mahmud, would bring those ideas of kingship, and much else, southwards, to Delhi.[98]

From Nītī to Naṣīhat

The provenance of advice literature for rulers makes an equally fascinating appearance in early India.[99] The huge body of literature commonly known as *nītiśāstra* ['policy' manuals/treatises] refers to a *genre* which evolved over a period of time — from times 'immemorial' — but more definitely between the 2nd and 12th centuries AD, and as recently as the 20th century, continued to evolve and appear as performative political advice texts. The peculiarity of this long journey, namely that its 'origins' are simply

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[98] I have not discussed these major 'Mirrors' here because all of them derived their ideas from the earlier texts, on which this section has concentrated. Summarising them here would mean duplicating the ideas already discussed; rather I have attempted to trace the contextual evolution of some prominent themes and motifs which will find resonance in the following chapters. On the Ghaznavids, see C.E. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids* and *The Later Ghaznavids*; see also *idem*, 'The Development of Persian Culture under the Early Ghaznavids', *Iran*, 6, 1968, pp. 33-44.

[99] Mill's pervasive division of 'ancient/Hindu', 'medieval/Muslim', and 'modern/British' Indian history has been questioned by many modern historians; I use the term 'early India' in the sense in which it is developed in R. Thapar, *Early India: From the Origins to AD 1300*, London, 2002; see especially pp. 29-32, and the important caveat regarding the use of 'India' on p. xviii, *n.* 1.

presumed and not historically verifiable serves the purpose of this chapter well: it allows us to consider the proposition that the existence of aphorisms, ethics, maxims, morals, etc. in any society is not extraordinary, and our concerns therefore remain only with the textual.

Commenting on 'story-telling' in ancient cultures, Maurice Winternitz observes that 'in India there were in all times numberless idlers. Thousands of ascetics, mendicants and pilgrims have been wandering there throughout cities and villages since centuries ago, and they have always liked to attract the people towards them by telling them stories and to while away their own time in narrating among themselves stories, that have not always been religious.'[100] However, what is of interest is the process by which these popular stories dovetail in textual traditions, and emerge as languages of social and political control. With the appearance of political systems in early India, and the consequent arrival of advice literatures, the [non-religious] 'stories' that Winternitz refers to above weave themselves into narratives of worldly wisdom, becoming a necessary part of an educated person's *ouevre* even in early India.[101] It is indicative of the strategies that elites brought to bear from positions of privilege upon their societies; in the case of advice literature, it was addressed directly to the ruler.[102]

The study of ancient Indian literature, especially classical Sanskrit literature, has shown that even the earliest dateable texts betray an impressively developed tradition of 'advice' and 'wisdom' sayings. This treasure of 'nice sayings', commonly referred to as *subhāṣita*, appears in its best form in the [relatively later] Savitri poem in the *Mahābhārata*, but its general prevalence in early India is unquestionable.[103] *Subhāṣita*s, sententious sayings which 'belonged to the floating mass of oral tradition, were probably strung together in the beginning of the Christian era.'[104] Two of these — the

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[100] M. Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature,* Vol. 3, trans. S. Jha, Delhi, rpt 1998, p. 331*n*. While the statement has a distinct generality and condescension of which I am wary, it is nonetheless indicative of the peculiar solidification of various strands in advice literatures in early India.
[101] Winternitz, *ibid.*, p. 149, and *n.* 4; L. Sternbach, *Subhāṣita, Gnomic and Didactic Literature*, in Jan Gonda, ed., *A History of Indian Literature,* Part of Vol. IV, Wiesbaden, 1974, p. 1; it is interesting to note similarities in the Islamic context: see Dale F. Eickelman, 'The Art of Memory: Islamic Knowledge and Its Social Reproduction', *CSSH*, 20, 1978, p. 490.
[102] The in-built protection of privileges, and the attendant questions of legitimisation of political rule are issues that will we will return to in chapter 4.
[103] Winternitz, *History*, p. 149f.
[104] Sternbach, *Subhāṣita, Gnomic and Didactic Literature,* p. 4*f* for a brief history of this *genre*.

Arthaśāstra and the *Pañcatantra* — are prominent and important for our concerns, and will be the focus of the following pages.

The partnership of the two upper castes [priests and warriors] in post-Vedic India led to an important alteration of the codification of texts, the *Dharmaśāstra*s [the traditional law books of the Hindus, initiated by the mythical law-giver Manu] and *arthaśāstra*s [texts on polity]. Political ideas now entered the realm of *dharma* [duty], blurring the distinctions between the arenas of ritual and moral performance. For people at large, this meant that different actions were combined under larger rubrics like 'duty'. 'Obedience' [even to political authority], identified squarely as *artha,* became one more prescribed action for the common people towards attaining salvation, *mokṣa*, the normative destination of all beings. It is against this background that we need to situate texts dealing with *arthaśāstra*; its importance amongst the general body of political advice literature is, in fact, located at the crossroads of 'religion' and 'politics' in which it finds itself.[105] According to Winternitz, *arthaśāstra* includes in it 'all theories and manuals that deal with practical life', its most important element being politics. And, since the nature of the text is prescriptive, its ideas appear like 'policy' [*nīti*] advice necessary for any king [*rāja*; *rājan*] to equip himself for the job of governance.[106] This meant, for textual purposes, that *arthaśāstra, nītisastra,* and *rājanīti* became almost synonymous with each other, amplifying the overlapping semantic arenas of these concepts, reflecting the complex social realities of the times.

The first 'empire' in the history of the subcontinent is that of the Mauryas, *c.* 321-185 BC, with their capital at Pataliputra [eastern India] and it is with this empire that the *Arthaśāstra* has traditionally been identified.[107] The contested nature of kingship —

[105] 'Arthaśāstra' may broadly be defined as being associated with philosophy [...] that it is a lamp for all sciences, means for execution of all the affairs and basis for all that is to be done.' Winternitz, *History*, p. 504.

[106] Winternitz, *History*, p. 608; on the etymology of *rājan*, especially in relation to the Sun, see N.G. Chapekar, 'Rajan', *Journal of Indian History*, 42, 1964, pp. 219-28.

[107] Authorship and dates are notoriously difficult for texts from this period. Till further research appears, it is now agreed to date Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra* over a period of a millennium, starting from the 2nd century AD; cf., T.R. Trautmann, *Kauṭilya and the Arthaśāstra: A Statistical Investigation of the Authorship and Investigation of the Text*, Leiden, 1971; for details of earlier debates, see R. P. Kangle, ed., *The Kauṭilīya Arthaśāstra, Parts I -III*, 2e, Bombay, 1969, Part 3, pp. 59-115. From another perspective, S.C. Mishra, *Evolution of Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra: An Inscriptional Approach*, Delhi, 1997, concludes similarly that the text was finally completed in the 12th century AD, the first three 'strata' belonging to the Mauryan period, the 2nd century AD, and the 5th-6th centuries AD. This means that the text covered a number of political dispensations across the centuries, and a study of the evolution of the

with regard to religion and politics — perhaps finds its most eloquent exposition in Chanakya's *Arthaśāstra*. The extent of its details and the vastness of the governmental apparatus it creates and describes signifies the importance of the need for such texts, and their popularity in post-Vedic times. Thus, in the first section itself the author informs us that in his opinion *artha* is the 'most important' [*pradhān*], over *dharma* and *kāma*. This brings the manual in direct collision with the claims made in the *Dharmaśāstra*s about the superiority of *dharma*; and it is the submission of this dissertation that this tension marked the writing of political advice literature in the subcontinent in a particular way because of its 'religio-scape', significantly different from similar impressions that one may have about advice literatures in other civilisations.

It is not the purpose of this chapter to detail the contents of this complex text;[108] however, by focussing in brief on its ideas on *dharma*/kingship/governance, I hope to lay out the background of the theoretical articulation of governance in the subcontinent in the millennium preceding the emergence of the Delhi Sultanate.[109]

The text itself, as it has come down to us, is a highly organised one. It has an accurate list of contents at the beginning, and its 15 main chapters [*adhikāraṇa*s] and 180 topics [*prakāraṇa*s] show meticulous attention to detail, [and similar to the *Fatāwā*] all working cumulatively to consolidate and enhance royal authority and power. Its definition of its own utility is clarified towards the end of the work, where it is mentioned that the acquisition and protection of the earth is the primary objective of the science of politics [*arthaśāstra*], being the livelihood [*vṛttiḥ*] of 'men'.[110]

Towards that end, *artha* was not just a 'goal' in a man's life, but one that needed proper performance acquired through 'training' [*vinaya*], along with those of *dharma* and

'state' based on this text would be a worthwhile exercise. For a political history of the period, Thapar, *Early India*, pp. 1-325; for a general overview of the state, Hermann Kulke, ed., *The State in India, 1000-1700*, Delhi, 1995, pp. 1-47; for ideas of state in classical Sanskrit literature, Hartmut Scharfe, *The State in Indian Tradition*, Leiden, 1989.

108 Kangle, ed., *AŚ*.

109 However, attention must be drawn to the many kinds of information available in the *Arthaśāstra*, especially in the fields of society and culture. This makes it an even more valuable text than Barani's *Fatāwā* whose purpose is almost entirely political/prosopgraphic. See Hartmut Scharfe, *Investigations in Kauṭalya's Manual of Political Science*, Wiesbaden, 1993, pp. 252-93; Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, p. 626 and *passim*.

kāma.[111] The texts were thus meant to teach rulers/princes in this art. Thus, at least in textual traditions exemplified in the *Arthaśāstra*, proper training in this craft would enable acquisition and maintenance of the earth, the latter being geographically circumscribed to the subcontinent because of its innate 'Hindu' elements.[112] It is interesting to point out in this context that this vision of the 'earth' was in marked contrast to the Islamic concept of *dār ul-Islām*, which presupposed an ever-expanding frontier till the ends of the earth.

This overlap, contestation and redressal of privileges between the ritual elites and the military/political elites in the first millennium AD solidified in the textual articulation of *rājanīti* which was often used as a synonym for *arthaśāstra*.[113] In the first main section itself, the author informs us that philosophy [*ānvīṣikī*] constitued the basis of all the sciences that the prince was expected to learn, the others being knowledge of the Vedas [*trayī*], economics [*vārtā*], and administration [*daṇdanīti*]; proper knowledge of these which together constituted the science of politics would ensure stability of his rule, for a king with a confused vision of this science 'destroys the rajya and himself, *calita-śāstras tu ... rājyam ātmānaṃ cōpahantīti*.'[114] While we shall focus on the last, it is important to draw attention to the relevance of the two other 'knowledges' the ruler/prince is expected to possess: knowledge of the Vedas which embodies the caste-structured society, no doubt because as ruler he would also be the upholder of the *dharmi*c order, a goal achieved through the performance of various sacrificial rituals. Much like in Islamic advice literature which had developed through the centuries in the Middle East, the ruler was here identified with a number of natural elements like sun, wind, etc., and thought to appease other elements [like rain] through these rituals. This in turn fed the 'potency' of the ruler, a very important element in the articulation of kingly authority in early India.[115] *Arthaśāstra*, 4.3.1f says: 'There are eight great calamities of a divine origin: fire, floods, disease, famine, rats, wild animals, serpents,

[110] Kangle, ed., *AŚ*, 15.1.1-2.
[111] On the training and practice of *kāmaśāstra* as self-adornment amongst elites, see Daud M. Ali, *Courtly Culture and Political Life in Early Medieval India*, Cambridge, 2004.
[112] Kangle, ed., *AŚ*, Part III, pp. 2-3.
[113] For a fairly accurate summary of the contents of the complete text, see Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, pp. 616-26.
[114] Kangle, ed., *AŚ*, 8.2.12.
[115] Note how an aged ruler is often ritually 'killed' and his heir made successor, in Scharfe, *State in Indian Tradition*, pp. 44-51.

and evil spirits. From them he [king] should protect the *janapada* [territory].'[116] Such religio-political [often public] ritualistic performances by the ruler enhanced his quasi-religious grandeur as upholder of social order.[117] The knowledge of economics, on the other hand, is interesting for it underlines the importance of economics to the existence of polities, an element that is conspicuously absent from Barani's *Fatāwā*.

But it is to the exercise of the king's authority — *daṇḍanīti*, policy of exercise of authority/force — that we must now turn. In studying the personality of the ruler in the *Arthaśāstra*, one is reminded of the Hellenistic/Aristotelian concept of 'mean' which was visible in Islamic advice literature. The *Arthaśāstra* states that it is imperative for a ruler to control and defeat six enemies: desire, anger, greed, pride, power intoxication, and excessive pleasure.[118] Also, the polity [*rājya*] itself cannot be retained without the help of able ministers, an efficient army and bureaucracy and the help of friends/allies, amongst others for kingship is not a sole adventure.[119] While theoretically the king is the supreme conqueror [*vijigīṣu; netṛ*][120], in practice he requires the help of allies and friends because the polity is surrounded in near-concentric circles by enemies [*ari*], friends [*mitra*], and their friends [*arimitra; mitramitra*], and so on.[121] Various tactics and strategies, going into impressive and tedious detail, then elaborate on this conception of the polity; what is very crafty in all this, and relevant for us, is that whilst others are seen as essential to the maintenance of the king's supreme position, the king himself is located outside the *rājya*. This is important because it warns us against a possible presupposition, namely of seeing the 'king' as 'state'. *Arthaśāstra*, 8.2.1, *rāja rājyam iti prakṛti-saṃkṣepaḥ*, according to Scharfe, should be read as 'King, *rājya* — that is the sum of all the elements'. Of the seven elements mentioned in *Arthaśāstra,* 6.1.1 which includes the king [*svāmi*], Scharfe suggests convincingly that king and *rājya*

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[116] Scharfe, *Investigations,* p. 121. Interestingly, somewhat akin to problems of service in the court in *andarz* literature, Kangle, *AŚ,* 12.19, lists the 'king' as one of eight people who does not understand the grief of 'neighbours'; Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature,* p. 152.
[117] It is important to remember the ritual position of the queen; no royal ritual could be complete without the presence of the main queen, ascribing to her a ritualised political importance.
[118] Winternitz, *History,* p. 615; see, also, a slightly variant injunction in the Mārkaṇḍeya which, interestingly, includes the 'enemies', *śatravo*, as one of the six factors which *tend* to defeat a ruler: *kāmaḥ krodhaś ca lobhaś ca mado mānas tathaiva ca/ harṣaś ca śatravo hy ete vināśāya mahībhṛtām//,* cf. Theodor Zachariae, 'Die Weisheitssprüche des Sānāq bei aṭ-Ṭorṭūšī (Übersetzung und Kommentar)', *WZKM,* 28, 1914, p. 200.
[119] Winternitz, *ibid.,* p. 615: '... even the best ruler cannot become successful unless he has real friends and faithful attendants.'
[120] Scharfe, *Investigations,* p. 108.

together should correspond to the remaining six elements [which include the bureaucracy and allies]. '*Rājya* thus excludes the king himself, but includes his allies.'[122]

The relevance of this very complex textual articulation of the king's position in early India is indicative of a number of issues. First, it identifies the need to articulate the sovereign position of the king, yet it needs to acknowledge that in the volatile political canvas of the time, support both from inside [officers, treasury, army; *amātya, kośa, daṇḍa*] and outside [ally; *mitra*] is essential. This is in marked contrast to the Delhi Sultanate where the *bandagān-i khāṣṣ*, tied to the ruler through ties of loyalty, would become the bulwark of the political apparatus in the first 100 years after its establishment in 1192 AD.[123] Second, in a society that was trying to reorganise and articulate multiple positions of privilege through a complex mechanism of coercion and ritual legitimisation, the king had to tread carefully to ensure that his superior position was maintained. If contestations outside were dealt with help from allies and military prowess, tensions within were tempered by the complex religio-political philosophy which sought to create a subject population averse to the idea of rebellion or challenge to authority, and whose every day life was monitored by upper caste Brahmans. The maintenance of this structured framework [*dharmic* order] was, in turn, the primary duty of the ruler. 'Justice', a fundamental component of Islamic advice literature, thus performed a similar function in the Hindu complex, the ruler executing the role of upholder of elite privileges by theoretically legitimising political rule through religious practitioners and their knowledge in both contexts.

This brings us to a question of particular interest for this dissertation, one that has plagued scholars of Islamic and Sanskrit advice literature for decades. Did Chanakya and his aphorisms in any way influence Islamic ideas as seen in 'Mirrors' literature? The question is, in some senses, central to the concern of this chapter: is it possible to suggest that these advice literatures, being written in separate languages and geographical areas but not unconnected [as the translation of the *Pañcatantra* into the Persian *Kalīlā wa Dimnā* attests] actually drew ideas from one another, howsoever

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[121] *Ibid.*, pp. 108-12.
[122] *Ibid.*, p. 118.
[123] Kumar, 'Emergence'; also discussed in chapter 2.

minor they may be? Was it possible that Chanakya's aphorisms were known in the Islamic world? Sternbach has shown that individual aphorisms of Chanakya were certainly known [and in fact translated] in Tibet, Nepal, Manchuria, Mongolia, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Ceylon, and Indonesia. They appeared in both formal textual traditions as well as in popular proverbs, as in the case of Pali *lokanīti* in Burma.[124] At the same time, at least in the time of the Mauryas, particularly Ashoka [*r.* 268-31 BC], the empire had expanded into northwestern India and Central Asia. The possibility of Chanakya's aphorisms travelling to Islamic lands were certainly there. The issue is complicated further by the fact that a particular passage in Ibn al-Muqaffa's *Yātima* includes a maxim which is very similar to one of Chanakya's maxims quoted above. Muqaffa advises the king to imitate the actions of the eight natural phenomena; sun, moon, earth, rain, wind, fire, water and death, though there is no mention of Chanakya's name.[125]

The passage was used by Qutayba [also written as 'Usaybi'a'] who, in his *'Uyūn al-Anbā' fi Tabaqāt al-Aṭibbā'*, refers to 'Shanāq', an Indian physician and his works on poison.[126] He adds that Shanaq had acquired vast experience in medicine, was well versed in science and wisdom, skilled in astronomy, eloquent and favoured by Indian kings.[127] Interestingly, Usaybia mentions the *Muntaḥal al-Jawāhir* ['Selection of Gems'] as one of the texts authored by Shanaq [it being the same text mentioned by al-Turtushi later] along with a book on veterinary art.[128] According to Usaybia, Shanaq's work on poison was translated into Pahlawi by an Indian named 'Manka', and 'copied' in Arabic for the Barmakid Yahya b. Khalid by a man called Abu Hatim.[129] Further, Usaybia also quotes a maxim of Shanaq which coincides with a maxim of Turtushi's![130]

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[124] Interestingly, in Burma we also hear of the two overlapping strands of *dhammanīti* and *rājanītī*; see Sternbach, *Spread of Cāṇakya's Aphorisms*, pp. 42-45.
[125] Dawood, 'Mirrors', p. 186.
[126] On Usaybi'a and his *'Uyūn*, see W. Cureton, 'Extracts from the work entitled *'Uyūn al-'Anba fī tabaqāt alā-ṭibbā* or *Fountains of Information Respecting the Classes of Physicians*, by Muwaffik-uddín Abú-'labbas Ahmad Ibn Abú Usaibiāh (With Remarks by Professor H.H. Wilson)', *JRAS*, o.s., 6, 1841, pp. 108-9 on 'Shánák', pp. 110-11 on 'Mankah the Indian'.
[127] This is reminiscent of the many names given to Chanakya, each referring to his many talents.
[128] J. Jolly, 'Kollektaneen zum Kautilya-Arthasastra: 1: Shanaq'a Buch über die Gifte', *ZDMG*, 68, pp. 345-48; Sternbach, *Spread of Cāṇakya's Aphorisms*, p. 68, and *n.* 5.
[129] Dawood, 'Mirrors', p. 175.
[130] *Ibid.*, pp. 175, 186, *n.* 2.

In the 2nd century AD, al- Turtushi used the same information from Usaybia in his *Sirāj al-Mulūk.*[131]

Turtushi was more clear in his book about the genesis of the aphorism. He mentions the text *Muntaḥal al-Jawāhir*, compiled by an Indian named 'Shabāq' for the use of the kings of India.[132] The impression is strengthened by Ibn al-Nadim's reference to 'Shanāq' who wrote 'a book on administration/management, *kitāb shanāq fi al-tadbīr.*'[133]

All these bits of information, happening in and around the 2nd century AD and thereafter, gave rise to academic speculation about the influence of Chanakya on the writings of Muqaffa, and later on al-Turtushi. It was first contemplated by I. Gildemeister in his *Scriptorum Arabum de rebus Indicis loci et opuscula inedita,*[134] and articulated more undoubtedly by H.H. Wilson. Wilson was sure that Shanāq and Chanakya were one and the same, a belief seconded by E. Huber in his study of Indian maxims and morals. Huber presented this conclusion along with his impressions about the connections between the *Pañcatantra* and the *Kalīlā wa Dimnā* [thus making the suggestion more emphatic], and also suggested that al- Turtushi's 'Shabāq' was in fact a misplaced diacritical mark in the Arabic script on the second consonant, the [correct] replacement of which would allow us to read it as 'Shanāq', as suggested by Usaybia.[135]

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[131] al-Turtushi, *Sirāj*, p. 156; Dawood, 'Mirrors', p. 186. I have chosen not to discuss al-Turtushi's *Sirāj* in detail, but see Dawood, *ibid.*, pp. 167-98 where he suggests that the *Sirāj* signals the arrival of the 'Mirrors' as an 'independent' [from Pahlawi] *genre* of texts in Arabic literature.

[132] Dawood, *ibid.*, p. 174; Sternbach, *Spread of Cāṇakya's Aphorisms*, p. 68, *n.* 5.

[133] Ibn al-Nadim, *al-Fihrist*, Cairo, n.d., p. 305; see also pp. 315-16.

[134] J.G. Gildemeister, *Scriptorum Arabum de rebus Indicis loci et opuscula inedita, ad codicum Parisinorum, Leidanorum, Gothanorum fidem recensuit et illustravit Ioannes Gildemeister*, Bonnae, 1838, p. 96*n*.

[135] H.H. Wilson in Cureton, 'Extracts', *JRAS*, p. 119: 'Shánáq is probably intended for Chánakya although known to the Hindus as a moral and political writer only.'; E. Huber, *Sur le texte tibétain de quelques stances morales de Bharata*, Paris, 1911, p. 305*f.* uses al-Turtushi's *Sirāj*, p. 156, as reference to conclude thus: 'L'auteur arabe qui ignorait évidemment ce qu'est le *mada*, attribue cette parole de sagesse, et d'autres encore, à l'Indien Châbâq [شاباق] qui aurait écrit des maximes de politique pour un souverain hindou. Il est presque sûr qu'au lieu de Châbâq il faut lire, avec changement du point diacritique de la seconde consonne, Chânâq [شاناق] et que ce musulman espagnol avait connaisance d'un Kauṭilya çāstra ou d'un Nītiçāstra attribué à Cāṇakya./ The Arab writer who was evidently unaware of the *mada*, attributes these and other words of wisdom to the Indian writer Châbâq [شاباق], who was believed to have written these political maxims for a Hindu king. It is more or less certain that Châbâq should read Chânâq [شاناق], once the diacritical mark accompanying the second consonant has been changed, and that this Spanish Muslim knew of a certain Kautilya çāstra or Nītiçāstra attributed to Cāṇakya.'

All these suggestions were finally addressed by T. Zachariae in a detailed study in 1914.[136] Zachariae compared various maxims of al-Turtushi with those of Chanakya and came to the conclusion that a connection *could* be established between an Indian handbook on morals and al- Turtushi's *Sirāj* although he was unwilling to identify the Indian source with Chanakya's *Arthaśāstra*.[137] Later writers like Winternitz and Dawood have accepted these conclusions, though Sternbach [seemed to be very confused himself, referring to Shanāq/Chanakya as another Chanakya who authored the *Vaidyajīvana*, a medical work on the one hand, but contradicting it soon after] believed that while in a few cases some of the aphorisms in Turṭūshi's *Sirāj* were indeed based on Sanskrit sources, they were not based on Chanakya's aphorisms. However, he goes on to add that 'since the name of Canakya was famous not only in India but also outside of India and became synonymous with Indian wisdom and Indian oral maxims, Tortushi's *in majoram gloriam* referred to his collection of maxims to Canakya.'[138]

It is outside the scope of this dissertation to search for a definite answer to this question, but the details outlined above amplify the need to bear the larger context of advice literature whilst dealing with them. It should caution us to the fact that in the first millennium, such texts and ideas were prominent and central to the articulation of kingly power and sovereignty. Equally significant is the fact that it *is* possible to suggest a certain circularity of intellectual ideas regarding governance from two different religiously-encoded political textual traditions.

It would be worthwhile to mention over here that Chanakya's aphorisms were 'not well known' in Persia, and no individual translation or collection [of the *Arthaśāstra*] in the Persian language has been found till date.[139] However, A. Weber, who edited a Berlin manuscript of the *Cānakya-nitiśāstra* mentioned that one of the two Berlin manuscripts which he used contained a Persian translation. But this seemed to have been based on a

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[136] Zachariae, 'Die Weisheitssprüche', pp. 182-210. The article summarises earlier debates on pp. 182-84.
[137] Zachariae, *ibid.*, p. 210: 'Die Weisheitssprüche des Sānāq stammen aus einem indischen Lehrbuch der Rājanīti, das wirklich oder angeblich von dem berühmten Cāṇakya verfaßt war. Mit dem Arthaśāstra des Kauṭilya alias Cāṇakya kann die Vorlage des Arabers freilich nicht identifiziert werden./The wise sayings of Sānāq are drawn from an Indian text, the Rājanīti that was supposedly, or in actuality, written by the famous Cāṇakya. Yet in no way can the copy possessed by the Arab (writer) be identified as the Arthaśāstra of Kautilya alias Cāṇakya.'
[138] Winternitz, *History*, p. 151, *n.* 1; Dawood, 'Mirrors', p. 175; Sternbach, *Spread of Cāṇakya's Aphorisms*, pp. 68-69.
[139] Sternbach, *ibid.*, p. 70.

corrupt text of the Sanskrit manuscript; whenever the Sanskrit text was not understood, the translator simply transcribed the Sanskrit words into Persian.[140]

Contacts between the subcontinent and the Islamic heartlands were not always so difficult to decipher. The instance of the translation of the *Pañcatantra* into the Persian *Kalīlā wa Dimnā* is an example which underlines the need to remember that such texts did not exist in culturally specific or isolated frameworks; rather, they were mobile sets of ideas, accessible and adaptable to different settings and specificities. We have already referred to the *Kalīlā wa Dimnā* earlier, while discussing Ibn al-Muqaffa. Here, I will concentrate in brief upon the contents of the Sanskrit *Pañcatantra* and its emergence in Arabo-Persian textual traditions as *Kalīlā wa Dimnā.*

Typically, we are unable to date the *Pañcatantra* or know who was/were the author[s] of this text; and once again the original text is unavailable.[141] There is disagreement too about the name of the original text, with scholars like Winternitz arguing that it was *Tantrākhyāyika*, and Edgerton suggesting that the original version was also called *Pañcatantra.*[142] Whatever the case may have been, it is generally agreed that the original set of stories contained five main ['frame'] stories, each with an introduction, and a number of intercalated stories to match the morals of the frame story. This style of writing, I shall argue later, is a literary device well-suited to the intention[s] of the author[s] and the nature of the text which, by its own admission in its Introduction [*kathāmukha*], aspired to be an educational text for princes.[143] According to Edgerton,

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[140] A. F. Weber, *Verzeichniss der Sanskrit-Handschriften von Dr Weber*, Berlin, 1853, p. 221; Sternbach, *ibid.*The fact that the *Arthaśāstra* was not translated into Persian in the subcontinent at least up to 1400 is indicative of the particular political imaginations in which Persian advice literature developed in the subcontinent.

[141] Dates suggested by scholars vary between the 3rd century BC and before the 6th century AD. Cf., Winternitz, *History*, p. 317; Edgerton, *Panchatantra*, p. 182.

[142] There has also been some discussion about the meaning of the word *tantra*; these questions are discussed in G. T. Artola, 'The Title: "Pañcatantra"', *WZKM*, 52, 1953/55, pp. 380-85; see also, Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, p. 317; F. Edgerton, *The Panchatantra Reconstructed: An Attempt to Establish the Lost Original Sanskrit Text of the Most Famous of Indian Story-Collections on the Basis of the Principal Extant Versions. Text, Critical Apparatus, Introduction, Translation*, 2 vols, New Haven, 1924, pp. 4, 12-17. The views of two earlier scholars, Theodor Benfey and Johannes Hertel, are also discussed by Edgerton in detail, which I have chosen not to repeat.

[143] Cf., Winternitz, *History*, pp. 308-9. I will use the term 'intercalation' throughout to amplify the argument re. literary device to which I shall come shortly. It is used by Winternitz, *ibid.*, p. 312f. Edgerton, *Panchatantra*, Vol. 2, pp. 4-5ff uses 'emboxt' for the first phase of stories-within-stories, for further intercalations 'double "emboxment"', and for some later editions he says, '...we have a sort of "Chinese nest" of stories'; more recently, Bernard O'Kane has used 'nesting' for the same purpose; cf., *ibid.*, *Early Persian Painting*, p. 10.

> The introduction [...] suggests what must have been to the author's mind the key-note of the whole work: it was supposed to be a kind of *Fürtenspiegel* or *Mirror for Magistrates*, teaching worldly wisdom to princes, by entertaining examples, as well as by cleverly phrased precepts. The precepts are principally found in the verses which are abundantly scattered thru [*sic*] most parts of the work. The examples consist in the stories themselves, which are told mainly in prose.[144]

Despite the loss of the original manuscript[s], and the number of redactions and translations, this essential feature of the text has remained unchanged whilst there have been other structural readjustments and changes.[145] Its objective remained to be a normative text for princes [and later on 'for the youth'] to teach them the art of administration and worldly wisdom through fables, stories and epigrams, 'to teach in a pleasing style what the Indians call *nītiśāstra*, "the science of conduct", [...] which is called also by another name — *arthśāstra*, "the science of worldy gains".'[146]

The opening structure and the nature of the stories affirm the suggestion that this text, set in post-Vedic society, needs to be read and analysed as one of the most popular performative texts in the genre of advice literature. Even a cursory mention of the following will be indicative of the presumptions suggested herein.

First, while each of the five books forms a 'dramatic' unit in itself, all are *also* set into the main introductory frame.[147] It is interesting to note that the protagonist of the *kathāmukha* is a wise Brahman who undertakes to enlighten three ignorant princes, considering most of the other stories surround animals. This embodies the complicit and peculiarly hierarchised post-Vedic contestation mentioned earlier where the Brahman had to readjust his ritual/caste/social superiority in the service of the Kshatriya

[144] Edgerton, *ibid.*, p. 4.
[145] I will briefly discuss the changes in the structure of the narrative below, but for details see Edgerton, *Panchatantra*, pp. 12-48.
[146] Winternitz, *History*, p. 308; O'Kane, *Early Persian Painting*, pp. 23-24.
[147] In a similar [though not identical] manner, the repetitive use of Mahmud in the *Fatāwā* could be seen as a 'frame', limited in this case only to the personality of Mahmud and not to any story.

rulers/princes.[148] His readjusted superiority was also confirmed by the fact that it was he who would educate the princes in *artha/nītiśāstra*, thus becoming the fountain of knowledge by which power could be acquired and maintained. The subversive superiority of 'knowledge' over military strength is confirmed by the contents of the intercalated stories, being 'positively immoral in the political lessons they inculcate.' The story-teller and the political strategist are combined in the personality of the author.[149] Finally, the form of the stories, that of intercalation, signifies multi-layered meanings which need to be amplified for the young princes; they are hidden lessons told through entertaining animal fables which address both imagination and reality. The Brahman was, once again, central to this structure of advice; his ritually superior position was reconfirmed [albeit through rearticulation] in the new power nexus between elites.

Second, all the five 'books' have individual frame stories, but they also uphold certain clear-cut politco-ethical maxims: Book I is *mitrabhedam* [Separation of friends (i.e., how to separate allied enemies), the *ari* and *arimitra* of the Chanakya *Arthaśāstra*]. Book II is *mitraprāptiḥ* [Winning of friends (i.e., how to win allies), the *mitra* and *mitramitra* of the Chanakya *Arthaśāstra*]; here the moral is that even the weak who are fast friends are capable of saving themselves against a powerful enemy through mutual help. Book III is *saṁdhivigraham* [War and peace (i.e., how and when to make war and peace)] upholds the political principle of warfare and settlements through the story of the owls and the crows. Book IV is *labdhanāśam* [Loss of One's gettings (i.e., how to avoid the loss of what one has got)], taught through the frame-story of fools [monkey-turtle in frame story; donkey-trap and lion-fox in two sub-stories] who are deceived when they undertake actions in response to false words. Book V is *aparīkṣitakāritvam* [Hasty action (i.e., how to avoid hasty action)], the story of the innocent mongoose who is killed due to thoughtless [or ill-considered] action.[150]

[148] Winternitz, *History*, p. 317, suggests that the general social life as described in the text Brahmanical, with Vaiṣṇava tendencies; mythologically it is the common purāṇic divine world, and the minister is usually a Brahman.
[149] Edgerton, *Panchatantra*, p. 5.
[150] Cf., Artola, 'The Title', pp. 384-85; Winternitz, *History*, pp. 314-15; O'Kane, *Early Persian Painting*, pp. 22-23. For Books I and II, I have purposely referred to the Chanakya *Arthaśāstra* to draw attention to the parallel ideas of both texts. While I do not dwell upon it myself, Winternitz, *ibid.*, pp. 315-16 and *passim* discusses the *Pañcatantra*'s borrowings from other texts like the *Arthaśāstra* and *Mahābhārata*.

The conflation of *nīti* and *dharma* is amply evident here and does not need to be belaboured; however, their 'intercalated' realms does need to be underlined once again.[151] The tales in the *Pañcatantra* as a whole are concerned more with common worldly wisdom, with survival, rather than with other-worldly morals and virtues. The *dharma* of the ruler is to fight, and that in itself would allow him to enter heaven; *however,* as the tales demonstrate, might alone is not enough — guile and cunning, tact and strategy, intelligence and discernment — all play a role in the retention of power, the latter being the contribution of the 'wily' ministers [whose tone is set at the outset by Karataka and Damanaka in the fables] whose position in real life was almost always occupied by Brahmans.[152] And while the stories leave us in no doubt that a ruler must secure the welfare of his people, the superiority of the king must be retained at all costs, even through 'trickery', if need be.[153] A verse placed strategically at the end of Book I says:

> *na manuṣyaprakṛtinā śakyaṁ rājyaṁ praśāsitam I*
> *ye hi doṣā manuśyāṇāṃ ta eva nṛpaterguṇāḥ II*

> A state is governed not by the customs prevailing among common men;
> For what is a mistake for the people is of use for the king.[154]

The 'populist' nature of this advice text — the teaching of political morals and maxims through animal fables and tales — meant that it went on to become one of the most potent performative texts in the history of world literature. In its Persian form as *Kalīlā wa Dimnā* it was 'probably next to the Bible, translated into the largest number of languages in the world.'[155] Here, we shall concentrate only on the Persian translations, up to the end of the 14th century.

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151 This 'intercalation' of 'religion' and 'politics' will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 4 while debating the category of *jahāndārī* in Barani's *Fatāwā*.

152 Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, p. 317 says that in most ornate poetry of the period the minister was usually a Brahman. Further, he adds that the minister is usually a model of 'cunning' in Indian *nītiśāstra* traditions; the jackal embodies this in the subcontinent, while the fox does so in the European context. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 345, and the very interesting *n.* 1 where he says that neither the jackal nor the fox is particularly wise!

153 Johannes Hertel translated *tantra* as 'Klugheitsfall' (trickery case); Artola, 'The Title', p. 380; see also Edgerton, *Panchatantra*, p. 77, *n.* 2, where the author explains why Hertel thought that 'the original contained only stories teaching lessons of trickiness'.

154 Winternitz, *ibid.*, p. 316.

155 P. Wolff, German translator of the *Pañcatantra*, quoted in Winternitz, *History*, p. 333. V. Chauvin, *Bibliographie des ouvrages arabes*, Liege, 1897, Vol. 2, gives *inter alia* a list of 40 languages into which

The *Pañcatantra* is said to have travelled to the Islamic lands via Arzt Burzoe, the minister of the Sassanian king Khusrau Anushirvan [*r.* 531-79 AD]. While this translation is lost, those based on Burzoe's translation reveal that it had seven additional chapters; there was the story of Burzoe's expedition to India, and a new Introduction [written by Burzoe] presented an Indian king conversing with a philosopher in the main frame-story. Apart from this, he added five more stories, broadly of a similar nature to the pre-existing ones. This was an important textual development for it adapted the text from its post-Vedic, caste-conscious context to the expanding Islamic political culture, with its complex elite societal traits. This is suggested by a sentence in Burzoe's redaction indicating that Anushirvan 'passionately wished that this book should be not only the root of all culture and sum total of all wisdom and a guide to every kind of profitable work but ... would [also] be so potent that kings would utilise it in administration of their kingdoms and thereby they would lead their life in the right direction.'[156] This process of 'indigenisation', however, was not so overwhelming as to alter the original text, nor was it without criticism.[157]

A Syriac and Arabic rendering from the Pahlavi redaction have survived.[158] The Syriac version was translated around 570 AD by the famous Syrian priest Bad under the title *Kalīlag wa Damanag*; this translation is preserved with long gaps, particularly at the beginning. The Arabic translation [allegedly from Burzoe's Pahlavi rendition] entitled *Kalīlā wa Dimnā* was done by Muqaffa' around 750 AD; he dropped one story, and added a further five. It was this version that became the main source for translations into European languages; this development enlarged beyond all imaginations the contents of

the *Kalīla wa Dimnā* has been translated; Hertel has mentioned 15 Indian, 15 other Asian, 2 African and 22 European languages in translation; *ibid.*

156 Winternitz, *History*, p. 334; Edgerton, *Panchatantra*, p. 40f, outlines the changes in the Pahlavi translation, most significantly in the Introduction.

157 See al-Beruni's interesting statement: 'I wish I could translate the book *Pancatantra*, known among us as the book of Kalila and Dimna. It is far spread in various languages [...] in translations of people who are not free from the suspicion of having altered the text. For instance, Abdullah Ibn Almukaffa has added in his Arabic version the chapter about Barzoya, with the intention of raising doubts in the minds of people of feeble religious belief, and to gain and prepare them for the propagation of the doctrines of the Manichaeans.' *Idem*, *India*, trans. E.C. Sachau, abridged, ed. with Introduction and Notes by Q. Ahmad, 1983, New Delhi, rpt 1995, p. 74; on Muqaffa's alleged Manichaean connections, Dawood, 'Mirrors', pp. 37*ff.*

158 Edgerton, *Panchatantra*, p. 68f.

its stories, often reworked according to newer narrative traditions but, remarkably, retaining the contents very close to the original till date![159]

It is important to point out over here that although the text went into so many language translations, leading inevitably to alterations, readjustments and addition of contents with the passage of time,[160] its primary purpose remained much the same as mentioned in the original *kathāmukha*. Muqaffa's Preface announced:

... its intention is fourfold. First, it was put into the mouths of dumb animals so that light-hearted youths might flock to read it and their hearts be captivated by the rare use of animals. Secondly, it was intended to show the images (*khayalat*) of the animals in varieties of plants and colours (*asbāgh, alwān*) so as to delight the hearts of princes, increase their pleasure, and also the degree of care which they would bestow on their work. Thirdly, it was intended that the book should be such that both kings and common folk should not cease to acquire it; that it might be repeatedly copied and re-created in the course of time thus giving work to the painter (*musawwir*) and copyist (*nasikh*). The fourth purpose of the work concerns the philosophers in particular (i.e. the apologues put into the mouths of animals).[161]

The text had obviously become very popular in the Islamic heartlands in the 13th-14th centuries, as recent research by Bernard O'Kane has shown.[162] Interestingly, there was a faithful Persian translation of the Arabic redaction which was very close to the original setting of stories done around 1142 AD by Abul Maali Nasrallah ibn Muhammad ibn Abd al-Hamid entitled *Kitāb Kalīlā wa Dimnā*.[163]

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[159] Winternitz, *History*, pp. 333-37, lists translations in various European languages for our time period: one more in Syriac, 10-11th century; one Greek at the end of the 11th century, on which are based one Italian, two Latin, one German and several Slav translations; one in Italian and one in Hebrew at the beginning of the 12th century, the latter being translated in Latin in the 13th century and upon which is based the famous German translation of Anton von Pforr; another in Hebrew in the 13th century; one in Spanish in the mid-13th century. Redactions in the subcontinent include a Jaina version in 1199 AD; and the most famous of them all, the *Hitopadeśa*, from Bengal, written between the 9th-14th centuries; cf. Edgerton, *Panchatantra*, pp. 20-22, 30-39.

[160] On the various changes in the Arabic and Persian manuscripts till the end of the 14th century, see O'Kane, *Early Persian Painting*, pp. 23-27.

[161] D.S. Rice, 'The Oldest Illustrated Arabic Manuscript', *BSOAS*, 22, 1959, p. 209.

[162] O'Kane, *Early Persian Painting*. One important evidence of its popularity are the innumerable illustrated manuscripts from the period. Interestingly, O'Kane suggests that pre-Islamic copies of Burzoe's manuscript may also have been illustrated. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

[163] Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, p. 336.

Not only was the *Pañcatantra*, then, a 'Mirrors', it was also for the common man to read, learn and be entertained. It was this ability of the text, to cut across social boundaries through its peculiar zoological appeal that serves the purposes of this chapter well:[164] in a radically different manner, by becoming a fully accessible oral and textual narrative, devoid of any pretence to elite structures of knowledge, it was able to entertain and inform a much wider audience of the 'ways of the world', of the need to conduct oneself in particular ways irrespective of, or according to, one's social position, to understand that survival in society was a constant battle, under threat from the more clever, and thus [by default] that there was some virtue in compliance with and endurance of commanding 'structures'.

There should be no doubts that both the *Arthaśāstra* and the *Pañcatantra* were elite texts: the former's structured codification in a classical language, often in terse verse, and the latter's method of intercalated stories required the mediation of the learned for its 'proper' understanding irrespective of the polities in which they were located. The fabulous illustrations accompanying the innumerable Persian manuscripts from this period attest to the importance given to the *Kalīlā wa Dimnā* in elite circles repeatedly; the continuing additions to the *Arthaśāstra* over a millennium and its repeated reference in later didactic texts suggest its enduring life. Both were essentially intended for rulers, to train them in the art of administration and kingship, and prepare them for their futures.

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Section 1 had concluded with the arrival of Perso-Islamic ideals of governance and ideals in Ghazna, suggesting its possible route to the subcontinent, and section 2 summarised two originally non-Islamic normative texts in the subcontinent which built upon long-drawn traditions within the subcontinental oral and textual *genre*s. This

[164] Two other prominent texts which have animal characters are the *Śukasaptati*, 'The Seventy-two Stories of the Parrot', and the *Tutinameh*, the famous [reworked] Persian rendering of the same text in the 14th century. Winternitz suggests peculiarly that 'we may refer to the Indian theory of the transmission of the soul, that directly obliterates the distinction between man and animal, and this seemed so natural that animals were made the heroes of stories.' Cf. Winternitz, *History*, pp. 377-82, 331. see also I.H. Siddiqui, '*Basātin al-Uns:* A Source of Information on the Sultanate of Delhi Under the Early Tughluq Sultans', *JPHS*, 36, 4, 1988, p. 299, where he suggests that this text too was 'an adaptation of Sanskrit stories that the friends of Ikhtisān related to him'.

section looks at a few normative texts that fall broadly under the 'Mirrors' *genre*, in the Persian literary traditions of the subcontinent. These form the immediate geographical and textual background of the *Fatāwā*. Such didactic texts may be divided into two distinct traditions straightaway: first, elite texts, written under courtly patronage by men of letters, or texts commissioned/written by upper class members of society; and second, mystical literature which outlines an alternative notion of 'governance'.[165] Here, I shall limit discussion to only one elite text, the *Ādāb al-Ḥarb*, though a brief mention of the *Chāchnāma*, an early text from Sind may be a useful point of departure.

The *Chāchnāma* is one of the earliest texts from the north-western region [written in Sanskrit, later translated into Arabic] of the subcontinent. Irfan Habib has suggested on the basis of linguistic analysis that it may be confidently attributed to the 7th century AD, and to the region of Sind, which the Arabs are known to have acquired slightly earlier.[166] The available manuscript is a later translation in Persian but Habib has shown that it is very faithful to the original. The *Chāchnāma* was allegedly written by a Brahman named Chach, and deals with the history and politics of the region of Sind in the 6th-8th centuries.[167] An Arabic translation of the manuscript was found with Qazi Ismail of Alor and Bakhar [in Sind] by al-Kufi sometime in the 12th century AD, and he translated it into Persian. Most of its details are historical, with almost no demonstrable normative element to it; according to Henry Elliot, 'an air of truth pervades the whole, and though it reads more like a romance than a history, yet this is occasioned more by the intrinsic interest of the subject, than by any fictions proceeding from the imaginations of the author.'[168]

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[165] This point will be taken up briefly in chapter 5, but see Kumar, 'Assertions of Authority'.

[166] Irfan Habib, *Linguistic Materials from Eighth-century Sind: An Exploration of the Chachnama* [Indian History Congress, Symposia Papers No. 11, 55th session, Aligarh, 1994], Delhi, 1994-95; for a general history, Hamida Khuhro, ed., *Sind through the Centuries*, Karachi, 1981; D.N. Maclean, *Religion and Society in Arab Sind*, Leiden, 1989.

[167] On the controversy about its name and other details, see H.M. Elliot and J. Dowson, *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, Vol. 1, 1867, rpt Delhi, 1996, pp. 131-37; N.A. Baloch, 'Fateh Nama and Its Source', *PPHC*, 5th Session, Khairpur, 1955, pp. 79-82; Baloch has suggested that the original name of the source was 'Tārikh-e-Hind-wa-Fateh-e-Sind', *ibid.*, p. 82. The Persian text has been edited by U.M. Daudpota, *Chāchnāma*, Hyderabad, 1939, trans. M K. Fredunbeg, *The Chachnamah: An Ancient History of Sind, Giving the Hindu Period down to the Arab Conquest*, Karachi, 1900.

[168] Elliot and Dowson, *The History of India*, Vol. 1, p. 136. Hardy, 'Is the *Chach Nama* Intelligible to the Historian as Political Theory', in Khuhro, ed., *Sind through the Centuries*, p. 111, misrepresents Elliot as saying that the *Chāch nāma* was more 'a romance than a history'.

It was Peter Hardy who first enquired if the *Chăchnāma* could be seen from another perspective, namely, as 'that of seeking intelligibility ... when treated as evidence for the history of political theory and tradition in Sind'.[169] Dominant political motifs, decipherable not through any individual dictum but as a general tone of the text, suggest the need for a balanced attitude towards politics. This balance is acquired by tempering ego and displaying good judgement in the management of the various elements of the polity, reminiscent of the Aristotelian mean in the early Arabic 'Mirrors' discussed in section 1. These 'elements' include [amongst others] women, the army and the revenue, artisans and agriculturalists. The need to adopt the proper posture towards the religious classes also appears prominently in the text; they should not be forced to abandon their religious vocation, rather they should be considered a part of the political structure and be given suitable duties; Muhammad ibn Qasim, the ruler of Sind, is said to have entrusted 'matters concerning Islamic law, judicial decision and the delivery of religious addresses, *umūr-i shar'i va muhimm-i dar-i qazā va khatābā*',[170] to religious personages. This is an important indicator of the trend towards the accommodation of the two religious groups, Muslim and non-Muslim, in political Islam, for it has been suggested that the translator al-Kufi may have 'reshaped' the meaning of the text.[171] Despite Habib's suggestions of the closeness of the translation to the original, the Perso-Islamic language and idiom of the text suggest a definite Islamic sheen. The fact that the translated text was dedicated to the *wazīr* of Nasir al-Din Qabacha, governor of Sind at the time [under a different title] in the early 13th century when the Delhi Sultanate was still struggling to gather its hold in the subcontinent is an important context in which this translation should be seen.[172]

Whatever the case may be, it is possible to say that there is a recognition of the interdependence of various components of a polity on one another; importantly, and distinctly different from Barani's articulation in the *Fatāwā*, is the recognition of the

[169] Hardy, '*Chach Nama*', p. 112.
[170] *Chăchnāma*, p. 235; Hardy, *ibid.*, p. 113.
[171] Hardy, *ibid.*; al-Kufi describes the text as a *tarjama* [lit. 'translation', but could also include elements of 'interpretation']: *bi qala'ida-i 'ibārat va pirāya-i ziyānat* [with collars of interpretation and embellishments of piety] so that it became *nau-bawa-i gharīb* [a new (for its freshness) young thing]. *Chăchnāma*, p. 11.
[172] For Qabacha and his contested relationship with the Delhi 'sultanate', see chapter 2; the new title of the manuscript was *Minhāj al-Dīn va al-Mulk al-Hazrat al-Sadr al-Ajall al-Amīn 'Ain al-Mulk*. The title appears at the end of the manuscript, and was later shortened to *Tārikh-i Minhāj-i Masālik*.Cf., Baloch, 'Fateh Nama', p. 79; Elliot and Dowson, *The History of India*, p. 131.

interdependent relationship of rulers/warriors with the productive classes. Further, the importance attributed to building politically constructive relationships with local power-lords [*rāī, rānā, thākur*];[173] the prominent role of the counsellor as a wise man whose counsel should be sought; and the control and welfare of the agents of the ruler are other significant indicators of the pragmatic political tone of the text. Peter Hardy sees in these the

> concepts of balance, of moderation, and, a bias towards accommodation between different elements in a body politic .... Beneath the Perso-Islamic idiom ... it is possible to see ideas of the same seven elements of policy [*sic*] — ruler, official, rural area, the fortified urban area, the permanent revenue, the standing army even the foreign ally ... as are to be found in the *Arthaśāstra* thinkers.[174]

We shall conclude our discussion of the *Chāchnāma* here because it is not, in any instance, a 'Mirrors'. However, the peculiar and interesting history of the transmission of the manuscript as also the similarity of its concerns with 'Mirrors' is a potent example to demonstrate the interdependence of textual traditions in the subcontinent, and the circulation and flow of ideas. Hopefully, it underlines the emphasis that this chapter has placed on the noetic economy of advice literature as it developed over centuries across the world.

The final text under consideration here, Fakhr-i Mudabbir's *Ādāb al-Ḥarb va al-Shuja'ā* is yet another interesting example which helps to amplify the geographical movement and evolution of political ideas in our period.

Section I of this chapter has traced the evolution of *adab* literature in the Islamic heartlands; importantly, its appearance in the subcontinent was in a fully developed form, and Mudabbir's *Adab* was one of its primary vehicles. Although the concept of *adab* underwent a process of evolution, adaptation and redefinition in the subcontinent, in essence it remained much the same: 'at once a concept, a literary genre, and a quality

[173] On the use of these terms in the texts and their relevance, see Habib, *Linguistic Materials*, pp. 11-14.
[174] Hardy, '*Chach Nama*', pp. 114, 116.

of personality'.[175] The development of the personal attributes of a 'cultivated' individual, especially the educated city-dweller, and the parallel development of the literary *genre* is significant. Wherever it may be located — in the body politic of an individual or a textual *genre* — it emphasised a form of moral exemplification permeated by religion on the one hand, and by contexts on the other. It was this interplay between the religious and the everyday which gave *adab* a 'radical comprehensiveness', a reference to external behaviour and social comportment but based fundamentally on a sophistication of inner qualities.[176] It was the result of deliberation and effort in all walks of life, and especially for elites, was a marker of status. Ethics, related closely to religion but not necessarily so, are the bulwark of character: and it is expressed in a variety of ways for different groups and peoples, embedded in norms, rules and practices, of which texts are only one repository. As this chapter has demonstrated, the exigencies of political Islam engendered an *adab* not always rooted in religious dogma, though often couched in ecclesiastical language. Peter Brown has suggested that in South Asia, the experience of being a dominant ruling minority was key to the development of *adab* as normative culture.[177] One could stretch this further to suggest that for the ruling classes, prescribed will contained in *adab* literature was a useful cornerstone to textually anchor their minority status. This being true for all ruling classes everywhere through time and space perhaps allowed for a legitimate space for such texts to exist and prosper. Examples in this chapter testify to this suggestion.

Mudabbir's text should be seen in this light. By the time of the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, political Islam and its legitimising traditions were fairly developed in areas from where this *genre* had travelled. Not much is known about Mudabbir's earlier life, but references from various writings of his own suggest that he belonged to an educated family, both parents bearing illustrious ancestors and his mother, in fact, was related to Amir Bilketigin, the ruler of Ghazni, *r.* AD 962-67 [and later father-in-law of

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[175] B.D. Metcalf, ed., *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of* Adab *in South Asian Islam*, Berkeley, 1984, p. 1.

[176] It is interesting to note that this sophistication, 'implicitly or explicitly distinguishe[d] cultivated behavior from that deemed vulgar, often defined as pre-Islamic', although the evolution of the textual *genre* may be traced from pre-Islamic times as shown in section 1 of this chapter. Metcalf, ed., *Moral Conduct*, p. 3*f*.

[177] Peter Brown, 'Late Antiquity and Islam: Parallels and Contrasts' in Metcalf, ed., *ibid.*, pp. 23-37.

Mahmud of Ghazni].[178] It seems that his ancestors were settled in Ghazni, but the attack by the Ghuzz tribe on Ghazni in AD 1162 pushed them southwards to Lahore. Mudabbir seems to have spent his childhood in the region of Lahore and Multan, and while his writings suggest an impressive command of language and style, the absence of any information on his teachers or formal education leaves one with the impression that he was educated at home by his highly educated father. He was presented to Muhammad ibn Sam in AD 1205 when he was about 48 years of age, and later in the same year he was also presented to the newly-crowned Sultan Qutb al-Din Aybak, to whom he presented another of his texts, a book of genealogies called the *Shajrā-i Ansāb*.[179] He is said to have presented his *Ādāb* to Sultan Iltutmish in Delhi in AD 1228, at the ripe old age [*bīr-i saīf*] of 71 years. Nothing is known of his vocation, though at least one modern historian has suggested that he 'might have been a teacher like his father but there is no evidence to show that he acted as a courtier or ever served in the army.'[180]

The *Ādāb al-Ḥarb wa al-Shuja'ā* is divided into two parts: of the total of 40 chapters [138 folios], 28 chapters deal with the art of warfare, its techniques, arms and weaponry, battle formations, tactics, *jihād*, etc. The details are many, specific and remarkable, in that there are chapters devoted entirely to one particular technique.[181] M.S. Khan, in her analysis of Mudabbir's life and works, identified the *Ādāb* with *andarz* literature 'which has a long-standing tradition in ancient Persia'.[182] And much like that tradition, there is a marked emphasis on the justness and kindness of rulers and a genuine concern for the welfare of the subject. True, cumulatively, the text upholds the creation of a *dār al-Islām*, and there is in fact a marked ethical and religious tone in the manuscript. But this

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[178] Mudabbir, *Ādāb al Ḥarb wa al Shuja'ā*, ed., A. S. Khwansārī, Tehran, 1346 A.H. pp. 246-47.

[179] Also called the *Kitāb-i Bahr al-Ansāb*; cf. E.D. Ross, 'The Genealogies of Fakhr-ud-Din Mubárak Sháh' in T.W. Arnold and R.A. Nicholson, eds, *Ajab Nameh: A Volume of Oriental Studies Presented to Edward G. Browne on his 60th Birthday*, Cambridge, 1922, pp. 392-413; on the controversy regarding his name, A.A.S. Khan, 'Fakhr-i-Mudabbir', *Islamic Culture*, 12, 4, 1938, pp. 397-404.

[180] M.S. Khan, 'Life and Works', p. 131.

[181] See for instance chapter 11 on archery, Khwansārī, *Ādāb*, pp. 240-56; note that he refers to Central Asian battle equipments too 'by way of comparison'. E. McEwen, 'Persian Archery Texts: Chapter Eleven of Fakhr-i Mudabbir's *Ādāb al-Ḥarb* (Early Thirteenth Century)', *Islamic Quarterly*, 18, 1974, p. 79. Khan, 'Life and Works', pp. 139-40, maintains that [according to Mudabbir] advice on military art was natural in such texts because it was central to the retention of power; and that perhaps no book on war was written before Mudabbir in this region, *ibid.*, p. 137, *n.* 69; see also *idem*, 'A Thirteenth Century Persian Source for the Art of Warfare in Early Medieval India', *JPHS*, 38, 4, 1990, pp. 293-308.

[182] Khan, 'Life and Works', p. 138.

tone, as I have suggested in chapter 2, has to do more with the needs of the Delhi Sultanate at the time rather than an inviolable conservatism of the authors.[183]

The text therefore presents us with a new variant of the 'Mirrors' *genre*, where the dominant motif is warfare, the knowledge of which is presented as the mainstay of just political rule. According to Mudabbir, since

> wars, world conquest, politics, government and administration of justice are the special privileges of the kings and rulers, and because these difficult tasks cannot be accomplished by them efficiently without men and beasts of war, the conquerors and army commanders must have full knowledge of all aspects of warfare.'[184]

The political reality of the subcontinent is [understandably] in the background.

However, it is the first 12 chapters that are of interest for us; they deal with the role and responsibilities of the king, and what qualities he should search for in his ministers, advisors and officials.[185] It is relevant to note at this point that the British Library manuscript is entitled *Ādāb al-Mulūk wa Kifāyat al-Mamlūk* ('Customs of Kings and Maintenance of Subjects'), indicating the alternative focus of the text.

The text is different from others of the *genre* in that it does not dwell at length on 'checks and balances' between various government officials/departments. Its focus is more on the *manner* in which these responsibilities are to be discharged which are detailed in the text. Here we shall dwell upon the ruler only.[186]

Justice and generosity are the two main themes which have cropped up again and again in our study of the prescriptions for the ruler, and Mudabbir is no different. The practices that make a ruler truly 'just' are those of Islam; hence, logically, his

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[183] Note the use of *ḥarb* [battle] in the title of the text.
[184] *Ādāb*, pp. 19-21.
[185] For a summary analysis of the chapters on governance/court employees, Sunil Kumar, 'The Value of the *Ādāb al-Mulūk* as a Historical Source: An Insight into the Ideals and Expectations of Islamic Society in the Middle Period (A.D. 945-1500)', *IESHR*, 22, 3, 1985, pp. 307-27; for the various manuscripts and editions available, Khan, 'Life and Works', pp. 135-37; Alam, *Languages of Political Islam*, pp. 29-31.
[186] Kumar, *ibid.*, p. 309; the article also examines the prescribed roles of the various officials as described by Mudabbir.

prescriptions aspire for a better world, a *dār al-Islām*. However, to think that this meant a strict adherence to the *sharī'a* would be a misapprehension; it is not the glorification of religion at the cost of everything else, but the justness of rule [leading to happiness and prosperity of the subjects] which is the central theme. It is just rule which ensures the retention and continuation of political power, made all the more important by the particular religio-political timbre of the subjects of the subcontinent. And the role of the officials is central to this exercise since they act as the arms of royal power in the larger realm. Therefore, Mudabbir ponders over the way in which officers must conduct themselves in order to present the ruler as kind and just. In effect, then, there is a unity and connectedness in the entire structure of power; individually, each player needs to act with justness to create a larger just rule. Justness was in the service of social preservation and order; and this entire edifice, devoted as it was to power and control, was encoded in religiously garbed aphorisms and exhortations. According to Kumar, from one perspective 'the ideals influencing the private individual proved to be those which motivated his behaviour as an official of the monarch, his functions stemming from a personal responsibility undertaken for the moral ordering of the natural world.'[187]

Once again, implicit in this is the placement of the subjects as passive receivers of political philanthropy; historical events testify to the fact that this was often not so! What was at stake were the privileged position of the elites — committed theoretically to the glorification of religion — susceptible to disorder. Mudabbir's entreaty to the government officials to behave altruistically hopes to maintain just government and harmonious social relations, and is indicative of the strategies that elite texts bring to bear from their positions of privilege.

For the ruler's part, he was assured of God's blessings on the Day of Judgement if in his heart he was kind and just. Further, and reminiscent of a repetitive motif from pre-Islamic times, the rewards of his 'justness' were reflected in the potency of his rule vis-à-vis the natural elements: prosperity was described as an abundance of rain, crops,

[187] Kumar, *ibid.*, p. 311; he compares this with Kay Kaus Ibn Iskander's 'Circle of Justice' in his *Qābus nāmeh*, where there is an interdependence of each rung of the government on another for the survival of the entire structure.

flowing springs, canals and streams; God supported those individuals who discharged their responsibilities unselfishly.[188] Interestingly, at one place Mudabbir also says

> ... and from the favoured angels the science of accountancy was attached to Michael [...] who is the *Mustaufī* of God, and the provisionings of the people and *the drops of rain* are entrusted with him.[189]

There are other interesting details in his advice and exhortations to the individual officers which underline the larger motifs dealt with elsewhere in this chapter: the preservation of the privileges of the elites, acknowledgement of the superiority of the learned classes/theologians, etc. What is interesting is that the justness, grandeur and potency of the ruler is directly attached to the proper performance of roles of various officers. The additive return of all parts of this mechanism of domination and control, systemic in temporal space, is explained through an assurance of transcendental rewards. Sometimes, as in the case of Michael quoted above, a direct parallel was drawn between the ruler and one of his officers [*mustaufī*; comptroller].

Yet, despite this dominant pattern, there are two interesting twists to this text which need to be highlighted. First, while there is a typically patterned reference to God and the Day of Judgement when the actions of the people will be rewarded, and of which all mortals should be mindful — 'He should be warned of the Day of Judgement, for verily, whatever man sows he reaps'[190] — the significance of justice as a component is derived temporally from the pagan, pre-Islamic Sassanians in no uncertain words:

> Do justice, do justice for that is paradise,
> The house of the Khosroes is that of God.[191]

This direct reference to Anushirvan ['Khosroe'], and its identification with 'the House of God' is a very important indicator of the geneaology of prescriptive political maxims and ideas that this chapter has belaboured time and again; at the same time, there are

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[188] Khwansari, *Ādāb*, pp. 65-66.
[189] *Ibid.*, p. 19; Kumar, 'The value of the *Ādāb*', p. 314; emphasis mine.
[190] Khwansari, *Ādāb*, p. 19; also Kumar, 'The Value of the *Ādāb*', p. 312. The reward of paradise in the *Fatāwā* is reserved for the ruler only, reflecting greater elitism in textual imagination.
[191] Khwansari, *ibid.*, p. 27.

some elements with *sufic* resonances like the 'chains of transmissions' with God being the 'final accountant'.[192]

Second, and very importantly, is the significance of the context of the Delhi Sultanate. While it is true that we have here highlighted the exhortations for the ruler and his officials, it remains that this formed only a minor part of the entire text which was devoted most clearly to the art of warfare, as its title indicates. This should sensitise us to the fact that the Delhi Sultanate in the time of Iltutmish was very clearly a 'war zone', a *ḥarb*, and while moral exhortations could prescribe the making of a properly religiously-guided realm [*dār al-Islām*], in real terms kingship was about the use of force to assert and maintain power. Altruism, philanthropy, justice and all such virtues could not become active without having acquired territorial space and a subject population; thus, once again, textuality intervened to articulate a game of force, violence and power, of contested domains of authority and control.[193]

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These features map a certain trajectory of the *genre* of 'Mirrors' central to our discussion by the time they arrived in the subcontinent. Both the *Chāchnāma* and the *Ādāb* have given us reason to suggest that the later texts of this *genre* were addressed to an altered [progressed] form of political Islam, when compared to the very early times. This is most clearly visible in its aggressive tone in favour of the ruler, and the textual investments in elevating the ruler beyond every fault except those seen by God. For instance, in the *Chāchnāma*, physical display of 'grandeur', a dominant theme in the early texts, was relegated to relative unimportance as an attribute to enhance royal status; and in the *Ādāb,* the duties of the royal officials on behalf of the king make no mention whatsoever of the problems of serving the crown, which too was found liberally in the earlier texts, including the *Kalīlā wa Dimnā.*[194] These, I believe, are indicative of the changing nature of the frontier of political Islam, and the maturity and

[192] *Ibid.*, pp. 17-19.
[193] Khan, 'Life and Works', pp. 139-40 has shown that there are minor sections in Tusi's and Iskander's writings on warfare as well.
[194] O'Kane, *Early Persian Painting*, p. 24. The *Ādāb* is liberal in royal anecdotes from which may be teased out ruler-official relations, but there is no organised section of the book addressing the officials of the pitfalls of royal service as found in earlier texts. For the translation of some anecdotes, see I.M. Shafi, 'Fresh Light on the Ghaznavīds', *Islamic Culture*, 12, 2, 1938, pp. 189-234.

coming of age of an expanding Islam-ruled political realm which required more direct interaction with ground realities, increased use of force and warfare, and a more authoritarian governmental structure devoted and loyal to the crown, leaving little or no space for contrary advice for the rulers and officers. It also indicates the need to alter textual political ideology to address new political territories which were marked by ever-increasing particularities, the Indian subcontinent being a case in point.

It is important, I believe, to decipher the contexts in which such evolutionary textual processes emerge and become popular; and, logically, the multifarious impact it has through orality and textuality upon the masses, via the learned people. The importance of such a discussion for our study arises from the fact that while the texts do not always conceive of a 'polity' [in terms of its actual composition or nature], their articulation of 'governance' realises a subject community upon whom authority and control are sought to be asserted. The texts, prosopographic in conception, definition, and intent, therefore provide the structural 'grammar' for monarchies by apprehending a community of political citizenry sensitised to superior, hierarchical structures of control, and conditioned to obedience through a complex mechanism of caste, religion, rituals, ethics, morals and notions of security, as the case may be.[195]

While it has not been the attempt of this chapter to make any direct connections between these writings and Barani's *Fatāwā*, it needs to be underlined that these [geographical] areas would see more such literature in many languages, each growing upon the remnants of earlier ones, in meaning and impact![196] This should draw our attention to the importance of textual traditions and their effect on socio-political structures of governance across time and space. And this background should set in relief the *Fatāwā*, the focus of the remainder of this dissertation.

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[195] B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. edn, London, 1996, p. xiv, where he uses the phrase 'grammar of the nationalisms'. See also O'Kane, *Early Persian Painting*, p. 32, where he says that the illustrated book was also a 'legitimizing principle' for the Jalayirids, one of the most important Mongol patrons of *Kalīlā wa Dimnā* illustrated manuscripts.

[196] As easy reference, Sternbach, *Subhāṣita, Gnomic and Didactic Literature*; for details, Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*. This chapter has completely overlooked a very large body of similar literature and translation in Jaina, Buddhist and *ṣūfī* works for reasons of its immediate interest.

4

FATĀWĀ I JAHĀNDĀRĪ: GOVERNANCE CONTRA GOVERNMENT

This chapter [along with chapters 5 and 6] examine the *Fatāwā* from different perspectives. This chapter comprises two separate but inter-related sections which deal with the religious and political performance of kingship. My interpretation and analyses — of the text itself and the historiographical opinions discussed in the Introduction — are interlaced in these sections. This seemed to be a more meaningful and holistic exercise bearing in mind the method used to analyse the text as an entirety.

Section 1, 'The Justice of Religion' is a summary analysis of the contents of the *Fatāwā* which deal with the questions of religion and justice in the art of governance, with some latent references to the Delhi Sultanate. Similarly, section 2, 'The Politics of Kingship' analyses those pieces of information which Barani supplies to rulers as advisable acts of political rulership to sustain the political empire *even if* they contravene or violate the dictates of religion. The gaps that are thus created are where the meanings and 'value' of the *Fatāwā* are located.

The Justice of Religion

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful [...] Thanks and (praise) be to the Creator, who has adorned religion-promoting Sultans and Sovereign rulers with *justice*, *ke sultānān-i dīn-i parwar (va pādshahān-i sarwar) be-'adl bayārast,*; has made the people of the world obedient to their orders and incessant devotees of their kingdoms; has caused the earth to be inhabited and prosperous through *His abundant justice* and compassion, and the people to prosper under his protection through which order is established in this world, *wafūr-i 'adl va shafqat-i jahān-rā abādān va m'āmūr (gardānīd).* [1]

Thus begins the *Fatāwā*, not surprisingly lending itself and its author to accusations of religious extremism, political ideas preoccupied with and insistent on theological notions that intricately connect 'justice' with 'governance'.[2] It suggests that the

[1] Mss fol. 1b; text, p. 1; trans., p. 1; emphasis mine.
[2] M. Habib, 'Life and Thought of Ziauddin Barani', in Habib and Khan, *Political Theory*, pp. 117-72.

organising axis of the *Fatāwā* is 'justice' [*'adl*], identified with Islamic notions of correct, proper political rule [*jahāndārī*], upheld by religion-abiding rulers [*pādshahān-i Islām*, lit. 'kings of Islam']. All such political kingdoms were part of the 'domain of believers' [*dār al Islām*], with the 'state' [*mulk; daulat*] being the main political tool through which the laws of Muslims as embodied in the *sharī'a* were upheld: 'the kings of Islam, who consider the kingdom to be the sword of religion, *va salāṭīn-i Islām, ke mulk-rā tīgh-i dīn dānand*.[3] A chronic adherence to these was the right path, the honest fulfilment of the duty that Allah had chosen His viceregent, the ruler, to perform on earth.

But a careful reading of the passage above reveals that there is much more to it than meets the eye. Peter Hardy's comment that 'the language that Barani uses, the patterns and codes of thought that he uses in the manner he uses them, is *constitutive* of, not *reflective* of reality and meaning', is useful in this regard.[4] Considering that the largest part of Barani's 'Introduction' to the *Fatāwā* is missing — and this is an important loss given the value of his 'Introduction' to his *Tārīkh* for our understanding of the author's ideas expressed therein — it is perhaps useful to scrutinise this passage for a better appreciation of the *Fatāwā*.[5]

First, the ruler is appointed by the Creator [Allah]; second, 'justice' is *his* [the ruler's] primary, identifiable 'adornment';[6] and third, that the 'world' [*jahān*] has been populated by people who are 'obedient' to orders [of the ruler]. What comes hereafter contains the seeds of ideas that dominate the remainder of the text through a complex set of contested, sometimes contradictory, advice [*naṣīhat*]; that the prosperity of the people is dependent on the ruler's 'abundant justice' [*wafūr-i 'adl*] and 'compassion' [*shafqat*], and the proper functioning of this will ensure the creation and maintenance of 'order' [*intezām*] in '*this* world' [*ālam-i mulk*]. In other words, if the primary duty of the Islamic ruler is the execution of justice, its objective must be the creation of a prosperous subject-citizenry, those in his protection and upon whom he will rule. That

[3] Mss fol. 149b; text, p. 206; trans., p. 300.
[4] Hardy, *Historians*, p. ix; emphasis in original.
[5] Khan, 'Fatāwā', p. LIV.
[6] Chapter 5, section 2 discusses — in the context of Raziyya — the masculine conception of kingship in the *Fatāwā*.

this is not a logical outcome will be evident in the next section of this chapter where the non-religious, political elements of the ruler are elaborated.

It is useful to underline the fact that Barani sees God as the fountain of justice, the ruler being only the executor, the viceregent. This position of the ruler as an actor performing a role scripted by the Creator allows Barani to explain many other 'non-Islamic' ['there are Sunnah in the Faith which are all opposed to the customs and ways and business of monarchy'][7] requirements of kingship as the text unfolds. For the time being, however, it is sufficient to draw attention to Barani's vision of the ruler's temporal position, appointed by but not embodying Divinity. While this puts the ruler in an indisputably elevated position vis-à-vis common people, it also makes him [theoretically at least] a vulnerable pawn in the hands of those who have alternative access routes to God, the theologians ['*ulamā*] and the *sūfīs*![8]

Finally, the proper execution of justice and compassion over the people would lead to an 'ordering' of the world — an organised polity, obedient to command and rule, 'devotees of the kingdom' [*murīd-i daulat,* lit. 'disciples of state/kingdom'], upon whom political governance could be established and asserted. The still-nascent position of the Islamic ruling class in the subcontinent, the need to consolidate superior political rule over a map of warring kingdoms constantly asserting independence from Delhi, the advantages of a cohesive political citizenry in general, and the connection between this target polity and Barani's 'world' in the *Fatāwā* should be borne in mind for later discussions.[9]

The *Fatāwā* makes no excuses for why a community needs to be ruled. According to the text, polity's story of Genesis is simple and straightforward: in the making of the world, Allah himself created both 'evil and good, *al-khīr va al-shar*' in people. He also appointed the ruler who — 'if he throws himself under the protection of God and His

[7] Mss fol. 160a; text, p. 221; trans., pp. 324-25.
[8] The *Fatāwā* does not deal with this question in much detail, and hence I mention it only in passing. However, the history of political rule in the Delhi Sultanate is a complex story of acts of legitimation sought and asserted by rulers from the '*ulamā* and the *sūfīs*, a motif easily found in most modern analyses. For a good summary discussion of these contested positions of authority, see Kumar, 'Assertions of Authority'; Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate*, pp. 151-70.

"Word", [... and] if he were to read [the Quranic verse] "Indeed Allah Knows", *va khud rā dar panāh-i khudā va kalām-i khudā andāzad* [... *va*] *be nīst majkūr surah "qad sama' allāh" khwānde bāshad'* — will remain safe from the 'evil suggestions of Satan, *vasāvas-i shaytānī*, namely 'erroneous thoughts and faulty plans, *andīshha-i nāsawāb-o tadbīrhā-i khatā'*, and manage the affairs of the state 'without fear, *be khwof*'. Whatever appears in his mind he will consider 'good inspiration, *khātir-i ū andāzad*', and a prosperous kingdom will sprout![10] The making of evil by God should be cause for neither surprise nor fear, for 'just as divine blessings pour from the higher heaven to the earth below, in the same way numerous afflictions and evils fall on earth from the sky, *chunānche khairāt āsmānī zamān-zamān az ālam qadam bar zamīniān fāliz mi-shud, bala va sharūr va bisyār ham az āsmān bar zamīn mi āyad'*.[11]

This being a preordained phenomenon, the ruler's judgement of good and bad must also derive from the inspiration of Allah ['kingship is a divine bounty, hence it will not associate with mean qualities, *har gāh bādshāhī ni'mat-i khudā bāshad, ni'mat-i khudā bar-zāyīl nayāmīzad*],[12] these elements being attributed to humans at the time of their birth by God, and which manifest themselves in everything they do.[13] A good person is therefore always good, and a bad person always bad. Barani's political state rests in large measure on this conservative, inalienable and irrevocable social positioning of the high born and the low born, a violation of this being unacceptable in the functioning of the [divine act of] governance: '... how can [right judgement] flash in the mind of a man [...] unless a person is created for eternal felicity, right and well-directed thoughts, which are the surety for the religious as well as the worldly welfare.'[14] In practice, this meant that the low-born should never be given important, responsible offices for they were by their nature wicked, petty, greedy, etc. and would cause harm to the state. The 'governing class' [to use Muhammad Habib's phrase] should always be constituted of people of high birth, of old noble families who had a record of having served the crown.

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[9] See Peter Hardy, 'The Growth of Authority over a Conquered Political Elite: The Early Delhi Sultanate as a Possible Case Study', in John F. Richards, ed., *Kingship and Authority in South Asia*, Wisconsin, 1978, pp. 192-214.
[10] Mss fol. 2a; text, p. 3; trans., p. 2; *Political Theory*, p. 1, abridged.
[11] *Ibid.*
[12] Mss fol. 231b; text, p. 317; trans., p. 469.
[13] Mss fols 216a-b; text, p. 295; trans., p. 436.
[14] Mss fol. 20a; text, p. 30; trans., p. 43. While Barani does not mention anywhere that 'governance' itself is divine, it is used here against the background of the general proposition in the *Fatāwā* that religion and the state are 'twins'.

Since virtue and vice/good and evil have been 'linked to [the] souls' of people by Almighty God at the time of Creation, it can never change: 'The Prophet has said about the well born and the low born, "The vein is susceptible".'[15] Thus, not only should the ruler 'secure the honour due to good birth and noble lineage', but also 'see that men of humble born pass their lives in poverty and disgrace'! This is because the judgement of these people is dependent on inspiration from Allah: 'the truth is that the success of important affairs is dependant upon divine decrees, and the key to this success lies in right judgement, which the Almighty God infuses in the hearts of His creatures; and it is the primary duty of the ruler [himself chosen by God] to appoint people in whom God has instilled virtues, i.e., chosen through high birth to be eligible for service which 'cannot be achieved without the knowledge of the good and the evil among the subjects.' And since these people were those upon whom 'Almighty God has looked with the eye of terror at the time of forming their nature [...] do not let them come anywhere near your religious and governmental offices.' Otherwise sin and iniquity would arise in society because of them who think that God has no knowledge of the whole world.[16]

Unsurprisingly, the first illustrative anecdote in the *Fatāwā* speaks of Umru Lais and his brother, sons of a carpenter, *rūigar*, who had captured Khurasan, Sistan and the adjoining territories 'and declared himself a king by force, *va be-taghallub-i khud-rā bādshāh gūyānīd*'. Lais was taken captive by Amir Ismail who had been sent by the Caliph Umar to suppress the rebellion. But the capture came about after Ismail had realised through 'good inspiration' that Lais was planning to attack him despite a truce.

When Amir Ismail got up from his afternoon nap, his mind became suspicious and he said to himself: 'Umru Lais is a man of low birth, and the keeping of covenants cannot be expected from the low-born, *umru laīs kam asl ast vā az kam-aslān vaqā-i 'ahd-i chashm nātawān dāsht*' [...] but before that Ismail had already told his courtiers [...] 'This suspicion about Umru Lais,

[15] Mss fols 216b, 218b; text, 295, 297; trans., pp. 436, 440.
[16] Mss fols 216b, 17b, 24b-25a, 218a, 78b; text, pp. 295, 26-27, 36-37, 296, 114; trans., pp. 436, 36, 52-53, 439-40, 160-61. Importantly, Barani also mentions that in case piety is found in a low-born person 'then indeed the vein of his ancestors must have (at some time) had a mixture of high blood.' Mss fol. 218b; text, p. 298; trans., p. 441.

which was put into my mind [...] is a sign of good inspiration, *va īn badgamānī-i umru laīs ke dar dal-i man andākhtan* [...] *alāmat-i ilhām khīr būd* [...]'[17]

Given Barani's generally orthodox ideas, it seems almost needless to say that non-Muslims were most definitely considered unappointable by him; what is in fact more interesting is that when he speaks of people of low birth, he is actually referring to Muslims of non-noble heredity. Barani's diatribe against the non-Muslims in general, and the Hindus — 'who are worshippers of idols and of cow-dung, *ke but parast va sargīn parast and*'[18] — in particular, which has led historians to consider him a 'fanatic', however, hints to the fact that non-Muslims were also in his mind when he was thinking of service in the court. This should not be surprising since Muhammad bin Tughluq's court had the highest number of non-Muslims, especially Hindus, in service amongst rulers of the Delhi Sultanate. But in Barani's imaginary polity, the non-Muslims existed only at the periphery.[19] 'Society' constituted of believers, for 'the creation of mankind is for the worship [of God], *va nīz āfrīnash-i bandagān az barā-i bandagīsat*. As Almighty God has said [in the *Qur'ān*]: "We have not created men or jins except that they may worship us".'[20] This community of believers — all of whom were humans, and thus committed to the worship of Allah — comprised prophets [who were created pure]; saints [who, after attaining saintship, were now protected from sin]; the ruler [chosen by God to uphold His commandments] who would rule over the 'people, *avām*',characterised as they were by 'jealousy, envy, wrath, malice and evil', amongst other things![21]

In the early years of Islam, the religio-political state of Medina, first under the Prophet and then the four 'rightly-guided' caliphs had functioned according to this spirit,

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[17] Mss fols 3a-5a; text, pp. 5-7, trans., pp. 6-8; *Political Theory*, deleted (see p. 2). The historical inaccuracy of this episode is discussed in Habib and Khan, *Political Theory, ibid.*

[18] Mss fol. 119b; text, p. 166; trans., p. 238; later, he refers to 'Hindus, Mongols, Mushriks and Kafirs, who neither have had a Prophet nor a Revealed Book, but are worshippers of stones and water and cow dung, *hindu o mughol o mushrik o kāfir ra, ke ne ishān-rā paigambarī būd va ne kitābī manzil dārand, balki mang parast va āb parast va sargīn parastand.*' Cf., Mss fol. 203a; text, p. 277; trans., p. 408. Steingass, *Dictionary*, s.v. *mughol*, p. 1282, describes it as 'A Mogul', which implicitly does not exclude the 'Mongols', the Mughals claiming descent from the Timurids.

[19] See for instance mss fol. 203a-b; text, p. 277; trans., p. 409: '[...] it is concerning the kindness and terror of Umar, that the Holy *Qur'ān* says: "They are harsh towards the kafirs and kind towards each other.' Here Barani does not deny the existence of non-Muslims, but they are obviously not in 'mainstream' society.

[20] Mss fol. 44b; text, p. 67; trans., p. 96.

[21] Mss fol. 2a; text, p. 3, trans., pp. 2-3; *Political Theory*, deleted (see p. 1).

committed to upholding the Word.[22] However, passing ages caused corruptions, one of which was that with the coming of the Umayyads, the earlier politico-ecclesiastical leadership of the community turned into kingship — an institution essentially antithetical to the teachings of Islam, inherited from pre-Islamic times, an office which could be taken by force — and became a fundamental part of the Islamic political reality.[23] The pristine ethos of the Medinean polity had disappeared forever. Then, proximity to the Prophet had kept people on the right path; later, as time moved closer and closer to the Day of Judgement, 'the lower self and Satan [gained] ascendancy over all [actions] of mankind', increasingly coloured by this-worldly desires.[24] The desire for the attainment of the other world, possible through the uncompromising execution of religious justice, became lesser as rulers tilted more and more towards earthly kingdoms [their 'fleeting ephemeral rulership'][25] and thus gave greater importance to service and loyalty of supporters over consolidation of Belief and Truth!

The hierarchy in Barani's socio-political imagination is clear: this world is now different from what it was at the time of the Prophet, whose purity of thought and action automatically determined the correctness of things. There are saints who, born as humans, inhabit this world but are incapable of evil by virtue of their saintship; then there are the earthly rulers, appointed by God. The crux of Barani's social thought is to be found here: he has no philosophical engagement with *why* humans commit evil and sin, pondering over why God's own creatures would abandon His command; such thoughts would be loath to someone who considers philosophers, *falāsifā*, to be one of the two most important enemies of Islam.[26] His position is straightforward, and in some senses radical, since he identifies God as the creator of evil. By suggesting that God himself has created good and evil in humans, he identifies evil as a divinely created order. There is no cynicism in it; since God made it that way, that is the way it should be, this negative condition of existence being a part of Creation, matched by its 'pair', the virtuous.[27] *However,* God has also created a hierarchy — implying that there are

[22] Mss fol. 85a; text, p. 123; trans., p. 172; *Political Theory,* p. 32, abridged.
[23] Mss fols 224a, 99a; text, pp. 306-7, 141; trans., pp. 452, 200.
[24] Mss fol. 96b; text, p. 137; trans., pp. 194-95.
[25] Mss fols 199a, 208a; text, pp. 272, 284; trans., pp. 400, 418.
[26] Mss fol. 9b; text, p. 15; trans., p. 19.
[27] 'Almighty God has said: "We have created two souls", i.e., all things have been created in pairs, and after one thing another [opposite to it] has been brought into existence, *juft āfrīde shude ast, va bāz az yekī dīgarī rā dar vajūd āvarde and.*' Mss fol. 117b; text, p. 164; trans., p. 235.

them who should/will be above others — hence saints, kings, and then the commoners.[28] This hierarchy of mortals, from those untouched by evil [saints] to those who embody sin, evil and malice in their very being [common people] forms the nucleus of Barani's conception of a socio-political community whose organisation should embody the implications of this ordained asymmetry in social relations. In other words, society/community is *naturally* [divinely] conditioned to be ruled by those who have been chosen to rule, and true citizens are those who acquiesce to that superior authority, iterated in the opening passage of the *Fatāwā* quoted earlier: '[The Creator] has made the people of the world obedient to [the ruler's] orders and incessant devotees of their kingdoms.' 'Order' is therefore a given but is constantly at risk because of the baser actions of common people, and so God 'raises a man to the position of kingship and assigns the affairs of men to his discretion and judgement', through which 'the actions of [other] men bear fruit.'[29] God's choice of king should not be questioned because 'God does not impose a duty on a human being beyond his capacity'; in fact, 'the king is the proof of God' and this proof cannot be false.[30]

Kingship, then, is the central issue that concerns the *Fatāwā*, and an extremely complicated institution for Barani. Its complications arise for two reasons: first [and as mentioned earlier], all of mankind has been created by God for His worship. This is possible through 'humility, supplication, self-abnegation, submission, abjectness and helplessness [before God].' While the ruler can be a devotee of God through these attributes, these are rarely if ever the attributes of one who is a ruler. The office of kingship requires 'pride, aloofness from fellowmen, singularity of status, sublimity, dignity and respect' — almost all of which are in contradiction to the qualities of devotion to God.[31] Elsewhere, Barani is more eloquent: 'In the persons of kings and their companions, no *Sunnah* can be practicable because prophethood is the zenith of religiousness, *kamāl-i dīn dārīst,* and kingship is the highest pinnacle of earthly power,

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[28] The position of saints in the hierarchy is unclear. I have chosen to put them before kings because Barani often turns to the question of kings committing sin which is discussed in greater detail in chapter 5. The inclusion of saints alerts us to Barani's close association with the Chishti shaykh Nizam al-Din Awliya, although the fact that he took up a position in court [and much else] shows Barani's non-adherence to a basic principle of Chishti ideology, that of distance from politics, as referred to in chapter 2.

[29] Mss fol. 78b, 45b; text, p. 114, 69; trans., pp. 160-61, 98; *Political Theory,* p. 30, second quote deleted.

[30] Mss fols 187a, 234b; text, pp. 259, 322; trans., pp. 381, 475-76.

[31] Mss fol. 44b; text, p. 67; trans., p. 96.

kamāl-i dunyāst. These two perfections are inimical and contradictory to each other, and yoking them together is not within the bounds of possibility.'[32]

The king's position is 'impure' enough to make him capable of committing sin: 'those who have not been created (exclusively) for worship and offer their devotions (to God) with perseverance and effort, sometimes worship is witnessed from them and sometimes sins are observed.'[33] This was of course forgivable, but only if the king counterbalanced it by possessing the right religious convictions, namely upholding the *shari'a*; '[o]n the grounds that he protects and propagates the Faith, the evils and sins of his lower self are erased from the records of his life.'[34] In fact, monarchy would be futile if kings failed in protecting the Faith: in practice this translated into 'the order for the good and the prohibition of the evil', and the 'sharia made current, *ahkām-i sharī'a jārī gardad*'.[35] And in this the king would be helped extensively by the state officials, all of whom must also be of correct virtue and fortitude. 'The supporters, helpers, courtiers and partisans of the king are a conclusive proof of the merits and vices (as the case may be) of the king himself [...] similarity of type, whether of merit or of vice, is the source of agreement, association, hospitality and caress between them'.[36] Persons of merit, according to Barani means being of 'high birth, noble lineage, meritorious character, free born, possessors of excellent qualities' etc.;[37] needless to say this presumed them to be Muslim!

Appointing the meritorious would not only keep the society and administration in order, but would also save the king from being 'distressed and bewildered' on the Day of Judgement and ensure the continuation of the dynasty.[38] Barani mentions one officer in particular, the *muḥtāsib*, who should always be a strict regulator in terms of ensuring the overthrow of 'innovations, *bidat*' and ensure that people were acting according to the prescriptions of the *sharī'a*: 'It should be made compulsory on the *muḥtāsib*s to warn all

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32 Mss fol. 98b; text, p. 140; trans., p. 199; *Political Theory*, p. 39, rephrased.
33 Mss fol. 133b; text, p. 182; trans., p. 262.
34 Mss fol. 6b; text, p. 10; trans., p. 13. This quote contains the assured suggestion that kings *did* commit sins, a point that will be taken up in chapter 5.
35 Mss fol. 8a; text, p. 12; trans., p. 15.
36 Mss fols 207a-b; text, pp. 282-83; trans., pp. 416-17.
37 Mss fols 206b-207a; text, p. 282; trans., pp. 415-16.
38 *Ibid.* So strident is Barani about high birth that he gives the example of the pre-Islamic Caesars for Muslim rulers to bear in mind: 'The empire of the Khusraus extended for a very long period [because

those who are negligent in their prayers, and make all of them pray by force and punishment, who have abandoned praying altogether, *va har che dar mankarāt dar nazr-i muḥtasabān va amīr dādān dar āyad va yā dar nazr-i ālam-i būd, ānrā qal' o qam' kunand va mastūr va muḥfi rā izhār o afzāḥ mīkunand*'.[39]

It is significant that the *wazīr* – prime minister -- would play an important role in the appointment of all state officials — whose attributes of high birth, proper judgement, virtuous conduct, firmness of belief, strictness, preservation of the privileges of the deserving [high born], 'pious and God-fearing [... and not] avaricious, deceitful and greedy', etc., would together uphold the *sharī'a* such that the 'inhabited world becomes still more prosperous, and people are organised and are in good order, and they remain organised in good order.'[40] This could not be done by the low born and the base, for 'the great offices appertaining to "administration" have not been well-discharged by [them].'[41] It was not just important to initiate 'good order', but to maintain it as well; then, and only then, through the *continued* existence of order could political rule prosper.

Typically, Barani does not provide answers to a number of questions that arise from this position: how would the position of the *wazīr*, whose primary aim was the maintenance of kingly power, be expected to choose *sharī'a*-minded civil and military officials for administration in far-flung areas and not fear rebellion from the subject population? The political map of the subcontinent was spotted with power-heads at local/provincial levels, tactfully appeasing whom lay at the bottom of the lifeline of the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate. Rebellions were, in fact, often caused when state officials allied with these local power-lords and asserted independence against the centre. In such a

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they] did not permit any mean, low-born or wicked man, or a man who was a captive of vices, to become their courtier.' Mss fol. 207b; text, p. 283; trans., p. 417.

[39] Mss fols 8a, 9a; text, pp. 12-13; trans., pp. 16, 18. Steingass, *Dictionary*, s.v. *muḥtasib*, pp. 1183-84, lists a number of duties for this office. Barani uses it in the sense of 'the superintendent of police who examines weights, measures, and provisions, and prevents gambling, drinking, &c. The *muḥtasib* is seen as the actual executor of the king's commands to uphold the *sharī'a*.' Mss fol. 127b*f*, text, p. 177*f*; trans., p. 255*f*, contains the 'Copy of the Order which the Commander of the Faithful, Mamun, wrote in the Assembly of Religious Scholars with reference to the Inhabitants of Baghdad' so that officials would not exceed or transgress their duties. From where Barani may have got this 'Order' is unimaginable! See also U.N. Day, *The Government of the Sultanate*, Delhi, 2e, 1993.

[40] Mss fols 10a, 231b; text. pp. 15, 318; trans., pp. 20, 470.

[41] Mss fol. 218b; text, p. 298; trans., p. 440.

situation, it would seem only natural that rulers gave priority to loyalty — an important lament of Barani's about kingship in his times — over religion.

The army was also prescribed to help the ruler in his duty to uphold the Faith. Not only was the army expected to perform their usual defence/military duties, but one of their important listed jobs was to 'discharge the great obligations of the sovereign head'. These included, amongst other things, 'overthrow[ing] the molestors of the religion and the kingdom of Muhammad; uproot[ing] the molestors of the *sharīa* [...]; [and] enforc[ing] the orders of the *sharīa*.'[42] This is interesting for the following reasons: first, Barani gives the army a religious garb, not just as participants in political annexation but conversion and heresy control as well; second, such a position presumes the composition of the army to be Muslim only. The history of the Delhi Sultanate as we know it does not contain a single example where the army played this role. While chroniclers may have used theologically-biased language to describe victories and defeats, there is no conclusive evidence to indicate that any battle was fought *solely* for the glorification of religion.[43] The reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq saw many battles, almost all of which were fought either against rebels or external enemies, but none for the Faith.[44] On the contrary, the administrative structures of the sultanate show that for a long time, the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate were content with mere acknowledgement of their superiority over outlying areas and did little to convert the population. Barani's proposition that 'the real objective of true Muslim kings behind their wars and battles should be the desire for martyrdom, and they should find their hearts replete with this desire', rings faintly.[45]

Mahmud, the legendary progenitor of the Delhi Sultanate and the eponymous hero of the *Fatāwā*, was of course the favourite illustrative example. According to Barani, Mahmud had heard from pious religious scholars that 'the amount of merit that the king gets for his desire for martyrdom is not obtained by anyone else'; in fact, Barani ties it very closely with kingship when he says that not everyone — except those chosen by God — can become a martyr because 'martyrdom is a bounty from God, and it cannot

[42] Mss fol. 64b; text, p. 95; trans., p. 132.
[43] The best example of this kind of writing is Nizami's *Tāj al-Ma'āthir*, where the excessively florid [submerged in religious idioms] style makes meaning almost indecipherable.
[44] Later, Barani himself advises that battles should be avoided as far as possible, which is discussed in the next section.

be inscribed on anyone's heart through (self) effort and struggle.'[46] Of course, Mahmud's crowning achievement — and here the context of the Delhi Sultanate becomes evident once again in the *Fatāwā* — was the destruction of the idol of Manat [Somnath] in Gujarat, which led to the extirpation of the last of the pagan deities, a battle which Mahmud fought against various odds.[47] That this battle has gone down in the annals of History as one whose returns of booty were enormous for Mahmud must be only incidentally reminiscent in the following remark that Barani makes to highlight Mahmud's commitment to religion over politics: 'Sultan Mahmud has spent his life in holy wars. God only knows his true intentions, for in so many far-flung campaigns, he was not particularly desirous of spoils and wealth.'[48]

Perhaps a more extreme opinion comes in Barani's example of the caliph Umar and his attack on the enemies of the faith of Islam, such that 'in the whole territory of Iraq no Magian, Majusi or fire-worshipper' had been spared. When he captured Jerusalem, he ordered that 'every Jew or Christian who wished to enter the temple of Jerusalem for a pilgrimage [...] was to offer one dinar of gold to the governor of the Mussulmans, receive one slap from the hand of one of his men, and pay his respects to him, and then enter the temple.'[49]

How could such a political injunction, or one emphasising *jihād*, be practiced over a subject population that was largely non-Muslim in the subcontinent? What could be the impact of such a political discourse? How would the army, given their mixed composition, be drilled to do these jobs? These are, of course, issues that Barani does not address. He simply presumes that the entire ruling class would be of 'meritorious'

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45 Mss fol. 9a; text, p. 14; trans., pp. 18-19.
46 Mss fol. 10a; text, p. 15; trans., pp. 19-20.
47 See Mss fols 11a, 38b-39b; text, pp. 16, 58-59; trans., pp. 21, 83-85. We will return to Mahmud and the temple of Somnath in greater detail in chapter 5. Mahmud's commitment to *jihād* over political rule is also underlined in Barani's narration of Mahmud's annexation of Khwarazm; cf. mss fol. 10b; text, p. 16; trans., p. 21; and for Umar's examples, mss fols 201a-204b; text, pp. 274-79; trans., pp. 405-11.
48 Mss fol. 9b; text, p. 15; trans., p. 19.
49 Mss fols 202b-203a; text, pp. 276-77; trans., p. 408. Steingass, *Dictionary*, s.v. 'majūsī', p. 1179, 'fire worshippers'. Temples and idolatry were particularly attacked by writers and artists in their narration of the political dominance of Islam. Earlier in the text, Barani celebrates the complete extirpation of 'the religion of the Magians and the community of the fire-worshippers ... overthrew their fire-temples and places of worship.' Mss fol. 30b; text, p. 46; trans., pp. 65-66. See also how 'the temple idols fall and the sea dries up at the birth of the Prophet' as depicted in the *Hamzānāmā*, *c.* 1565, vol. unknown, #96, reprinted in *The Adventures of Hamza*, Washington DC, 2002, p. 88. Interestingly, the human faces [as seen in the paintings now] were destroyed in the belief that Islam forbids the representation of human forms.

Muslims, and the glorification of religion would come naturally to them, buoyed by the presence of superior, similarly inclined officials appointed by the ruler. That this situation was far from the realities of the Delhi Sultanate, and could perhaps spell disaster for Islamic political rule in the subcontinent is something that seemingly does not concern Barani in the *Fatāwā*. Note that it is not enough for the king to either 'protect' or 'propagate' the Faith, but to do both *actively*. The line of demarcation between this 'protection' of faith and the protection of the privileges of the nobility and the high born — all of them being Muslim, of course — will be a very easy and convenient transition for Barani to make later on.

Let us return to the political hierarchy of prophets and kings. In separating the nature of the two offices, prophethood and kingship, in the way that he does, Barani's political acumen becomes clearly visible. While the position of the prophet is unquestioned ['zenith, *kamāl*'], it is clearly located in the realm of 'religiousness, *dīndārī*'; the king occupies the equally unchallenged 'earthly' position. Such an allocation of realms ensures for both a supremacy of authority and governance, underlining not just the vexatious issue of 'religion and politics' in Islam, but also the realities of the Delhi Sultanate where contesting claims to authority and governance marked the rule of the Khalajis and Tughluqs with regards to *sūfīs*, a phenomenon that Barani would have witnessed from both the positions *he* occupied — as a courtier of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq and as a disciple of Shaykh Nizam al-Din Awliya. This separation will also be useful for him to explain the need for kingship in a post-Prophet Islamic society.[50]

The second issue was that kingship, *jamshedi*, was an un-Islamic institution according to Barani, practised by the people of the 'ancient' world: 'Ajam [Pre-Islamic Middle East: Iraq, Iran, etc.], Rum [Anatolia], Yemen, India, Syria and Egypt'. In Islam, the perfection of the institution — i.e., the perfect combination of religious humility and political command had ended with the period of the four rightly-guided caliphs. Thereafter, rulers were compelled to fall back on the traditions of the Khusraus,[51] who had excelled in this practice, even though 'the [...] actions of the Khusraus is

[50] Here 'society' includes political governance as well, and draws attention to the overlap of these two in the time of the Prophet, a point that has been referred to earlier.
[51] 'Khusraus/Caesars' refers to pre-Islamic [usually Sassanian] kings. Steingass, *Dictionary*, s.v. 'khusrau', p. 460, 'a great king, a celebrated Persian king'.

considered to be all forbidden and unlawful in the religion of Islam.'[52] Barani argues that since the lands of the Khusraus had now been taken over by the Muslims, the rulers should

> make some unbelievers [the Khusraus] the foundation of their power and grandeur, so that they may utilise their authority and [dignity] for the protection and promotion of the Faith; for ensuring the supremacy of the true Word; for overthrowing *kufr* and *shirk*; and for elevating the prestige of Islam by [killing] and slaughtering the enemies of the Faith.[53]

Ehsan Yarshater, in his study of pre-Islamic Persian influence in the Islamic world, has stressed repeatedly the many ways in which political Islam used and built upon the political scaffolding of the Sassanids. Often, Muslim rulers would conquer an area and reappoint the earlier officials because they were still to develop an Islamic [religio]-bureaucratic framework.[54] Where kingship is concerned, Barani provides much evidence for such propositions; at one place, he lists 18 'customs and traditions of the sultans of Ajam' including elements that have long since come to be identified as quintessentially Islamic such as large harems, elaborate courtly etiquette, prostration to the throne, gold, jewels and silk, etc., and other political actions which are forbidden in Islam.[55] Aziz al-Azmeh's *Muslim Kingship* studies this phenomenon on a wider canvas, both genealogically and comparatively, and concludes that

> salient themes from other historical experiences [...] are directly related to the caliphate and other Muslim institutions (E)arly Muslim polities were specific inflections of Late Antique discursive and visual forms and modes of enunciating royal and imperial power, and [...] the classical forms associated with Islamic history were specific and highly elaborate reworkings, over a period of many centuries, of earlier œcumenical, imperial, and politico-soteriological traditions.[56]

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[52] Mss fol. 99a; text, p. 141; trans., p. 200.
[53] *Ibid.*
[54] It is debatable if they were able to develop a politico-bureaucratic system that may be *entirely* 'bureaucratic'. For a useful summary, see Yarshater, ed., *Persian Presence*, 'Introduction'.
[55] Mss fols 99a-b; text, pp. 140-41; trans., p. 201.
[56] Azmeh, *Islamic Kingship*, p. x. The motif of Sassanian pomp and splendour appears in a lot of Arabic 'Mirrors for Princes', as discussed in chapter 3. For its influence in the subcontinent, see M. Shokoohy, 'Sasanian Royal Emblems and their Re-emergence in the Fourteenth-century Deccan', *Muqarnas*, 11, 1994, pp. 65-78.

Barani's dilemma is intense: 'How can any king who adopts the customs and traditions of the Sultans of Ajam [...] consider himself a Mussulman, can get himself called a Mussulman, *ke rasm o rasūm-i salātīn-i ajam bar khilāf-i sunna* [...] *ū khud rā chegūne musalmān dānad va musalmān gūyand*, and rationally entertain the hope of salvation in the next world in his heart?'[57] In an illustrative anecdote early in the text, the famous ruler Haroun al-Rashid fears: 'I am afraid [...] that my end may not be good, and I may be one of those who may be ruined.'[58]

But then, the decidedly unlawful, anti-*sharī'a* practice – kingship -- is made acceptable by invoking none less than the Prophet. Once, when asked by his followers if it was prohibited to cut meat with a knife and then eat it it, the Prophet replied: 'It is not prohibited [...] but it is one of the customs of the rulers of Ajam ..., *harām nīst* [...] *lekin az rasūm-i salātīn-i ajam ast...*' And Barani adds: '... the eating of carrion, though prohibited, is permissible in time of need, *chunānche mardār ke mahrūm ast, dar hālat-i zarūrat mubah mīgardad.*'[59] What Barani achieves through the insertion of this anecdote are two important things: first, that there may be a number of practices that are considered 'forbidden' in Islam, but its reasons are not always strictly religious, rather broadly 'political' — as in the case of the Prophet's assertion that he would not eat meat cut with a knife simply because it was a custom of the king's of Ajam, not because Allah had forbidden it![60] Second [and following logically from the first], if not divinely forbidden, one could consider admissible a number of unIslamic practices — at least in the realm of the 'political' in Islam — evidenced in his citing of the possibility of eating carrion. In other words, hereafter Barani gains for politics a license which will be put to greater use in other parts of the text to achieve distinctly political ends, to which we will turn in the next section.

This ostensible theological problematic surrounding kingship is not new to this *genre* of writing; what is unique and novel to Barani's *Fatāwā* is probably the curious and clever canvas he paints, the responsibilities he allots, and the solutions he proposes. It is here

[57] Mss fols 100 a-b; text, pp. 142-43; trans., pp. 202-3.
[58] Mss fol. 14a; text, p. 21; trans., pp. 28-29.
[59] Mss fols 100a, 99a; text, pp. 142, 141; trans., pp. 200-2.
[60] For theological forbiddances in Islam, see the brilliant Michael Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought*, Cambridge, 2001; abridged in *idem*, *Forbidding Wrong in Islam: An Introduction*, Cambridge, 2003.

that the true value of the *Fatāwā* as a text lies; in apprehending how a contemporary scholar reorganises a time-worn theological position — the unIslamic-ness of political kingship — to the realities of Islamic political rule in the Indian subcontinent. How would a king [who according to Barani should 'detest rulership, *āmarat ra mutanfar bāshad*'][61] respond regarding his earthly duties on the Day of Judgement? Are Haroun al-Rashid's fears totally unfounded?

How, then, did Barani construct the portfolios of the king, his *wazīr* and God? What were the components of each of these offices, and why did they not — even textually — fly in the face of one another?

For the king, it was essential that he be of good faith; belief in the True Faith would not only make his kingdom prosperous through the blessings of God, but he would also be saved from the machinations of the evil-doers, as Amir Ismail was [in the earlier anecdote] from Umru Lais. His performative role as a Muslim individual and a king had clearly defined components, but their arenas of activity were closely intertwined. Barani is alert to mention from the outset that in many ways a king was like an ordinary mortal — he had a baser self which could commit sin, he may or may not be regular in his acts of devotion as prescribed in the religion, and may even be guilty of activities which are reprehensible in Islam — the drinking of wine, the acceptance of the practice of sodomy, etc.[62] The following quote summarises the position of the ruler's actions vis-à-vis religious conviction:

... it does not really matter if the king does not show excess in his devotions, religious observances, fasts, supererogatory prayers, *va har gāh bādshāh rā i'tiqād dar dīn-i saiyyid al-marsalīn rāsikh va sābit būd ke agar dar tā'ayāt-i ū ibādat-i ziyādtī va siyām-i nawāfal va tato'āt mustahab az rūze va namāz na-rasd, bākī nabūd* [...] the enjoyment of pleasures in which he indulges as a human being, are not taken into consideration, because of his firm religious

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[61] Mss fol. 134b; text, p. 183; trans., p. 265.

[62] Mss fols 6b, 212b, 175b; text, pp. 10, 290, 242; trans., pp. 13, 426, 356. Interestingly, the example of abstention from wine-drinking comes from a semi-fictional illustrative anecdote between the Hindu Rai of Kanauj and Sultan Bahram Gur, when the latter had lost his kingdom and sought refuge in the court of the former. Also, mss fol. 24a; text, p. 37; trans., p. 51, where Barani says that 'affairs of the kingdom must be attended at the purest possible time — before eating and drinking.'On wine-drinking in Islam, see also Kathryn Keuny, *The Rhetoric of Sobriety: Wine in Early Islam*, Albany, 2001; and Cook, *Forbidding Wrong in Islam, passim.*

convictions. On the grounds that he protects and propagates the faith, *ū dīnpanāhī va dīnparūrī mīkunad*, the evils and sins of his lower self are erased from the records of his life.[63]

With some disbelief ['it is strange, *ajab ānast*'][64] Barani says that a king is amongst the *abdāls* of the world;[65] and were he to be a devout worshipper of the True Faith, he would be the axis [*qutb*] of the world.[66] It makes clear that both types of rulers existed in the world(s) that Barani inhabited, whether textual or actual. But what is equally important is that there is no evidence to believe that any of the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate in Barani's lifetime fitted the second of the two above categories, although they may have laid claims to it.

The overtly religious nature of Barani's conception of governance and the roles of kings comes through in his suggestion, frequent and strong, that the king's primary desire should not be the acquisition of this world, rather, through the proper performance of true religious duties in this world — i.e., 'he keeps the inhabitants of his kingdom on the path of *sharī'a, va alāmat-i rasūkh i'tiqād-i bādshāh-i ān būd ke khud rā va ri'āyā va muhākat-i khud rā bar jāde-ye ahkām-i sharīat be-dārad* [67] — he should seek to attain salvation, otherwise it might become 'the cause of their captivity in the next [world]'.[68] And to underline the importance of answerability on the Day of Judgement, Barani quotes the Prophet Muhammad twice:

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63 Mss fol. 6b; text, p. 10; trans., pp. 12-13.

64 Mss fol. 7a; text, p. 10; trans., p. 13.

65 Steingass, *Dictionary*, pp. 5-6, s.v. *abdāl*: 'Persons by whom God continues the world in existence; also hermit, monk, religious novice, saint, enthusiast, [and interestingly for this dissertation] pretender to inspiration.'

66 Mss fol. 7a; text, p. 10; trans., p. 13. The word is, of course, reminiscent of the Qutb Minar in Mehrauli, Delhi, erected by the first governor-ruler of the Delhi Sultanate Qutb al-Din Aybak (AD 1206-10). Also, note that Minhaj describes Delhi as the 'dome of Islam, *qubbā-i Islām*', for the populace fleeing Central Asia especially after the sack of Baghdad in AD 1258. Juzjani, *Tabaqat*, Vol. 1, p. 441; and Kumar, 'Emergence', pp. 165-235.

67 Mss fol. 7a; text, p. 11; trans., p. 13.

68 Mss fol. 105a; text, p. 148; trans., p. 212: 'What a gross negligence it would be on his part if he does not obtain the kingdom of the next world by using the power conferred by Almighty God through his plenitude of justice, beneficence, charitable and meritorious actions, *vajah ghabanī-i fāhish bāshad ke az chunīn-i kudratī ke bārī ta'āliyā dar ḥaqq-i ū arzānī dāshtey ast, az bisyārī 'adl o ahsān o kashrat-i hasnat o mubarat-i mulk-i ākhirat rā dast nayārad.*' Also, mss fol. 7b; text, p. 12; trans., p. 15.

'Every Mussulman is the shepherd of his own house, and he will be questioned about the members of his household, *harīkī az musalmānān rā'ī khāne-i khud ast va az ra'iyyat-i 'ahl bayat-i khud pursīde khwāhad shud.*'[69]

'All of you will be called, and all of you will be questioned about your subjects.'[70]

Haroun al-Rashid's fears about his end may not be entirely misplaced; but contemporary Islamic rulers could, if they chose to listen to Barani, ensure their answerability on the Day of Judgement! Since the rulers [being Muslim] had already recognised the religion of Allah, they should spend their energies in the service of the religion of Mustafa so that

through the enforcement of the good and the prohibition of the evil the rites of Islam are elevated from time to time, virtue and rectitude arise, and charity and obedience not only appear, but appear with the beat of drums ... *va zamān-zamān az jartan-i amr ma'arūf o nahi mankar-i shu'ār-i islām buland gardad. va salāh o sadad be-ravīd va khairāt o ta'at barāyad, va tabl-i zanān barāyad.*[71]

This duty of the ruler was not for no good reason; since the institution of kingship was derived from the pre-Islamic times, it was important to remember that the Caesars, *kisrās*, had been tyrants. Barani is at his creative best when he gives his opinion in a typically circular way: he recommends 'high resolve' as an essential component for all rulers, yet 'the phrase "Resolve of Kings" is a precept of tyrants and not of Caliphs and kings of Islam.' And if a ruler exhibits 'perseverance in his *defective* and loathsome resolve, and followed the footsteps of the tyrants and the Kisras, the unworldly religious scholars and *wise men* of Islam have called it despotism and tyranny.'[72] One of the listed duties of the king is, in fact, to ensure that 'tyranny and oppression are overthrown'.[73]

What follows from above is that the ruler's primary duty must be the upkeep, establishment, maintenance and celebration of Islam and its laws, the *sharīa* of

[69] Mss fol. 205a; text, p. 280; trans., p. 412.
[70] Mss fols 204b-205a; text, p. 280; trans., p. 412.
[71] Mss fol. 122a; text, p. 170; trans., p. 244.
[72] Mss fol. 34a; text, p. 52; trans., p. 74.

Mustafa. All this could be executed through the constant practice of that one golden act, justice: 'golden' because, according to Barani, it was an all-encompassing action which could be manifest through all actions of governance. It was the basis of all discretion, and led to equity which was the mark of successful political rule. 'Mahmud's' advice to rulers on justice and equity opens thus:

Sultan Mahmud advises: O sons of Mahmud, know that [...] justice is a necessary condition of religion, and that religion is a necessary condition of justice [... the] distinction between the deserving and the undeserving is created by justice, and tyranny, oppression, pillage and plunder are manifested through it [...] without religion no stability is left in the affairs of men. No religion which is founded on laws, can do without justice.[74]

And then Barani continues:

Through the decrees of religion, justice prevents tyranny and oppression. Had there been no justice on earth, there would have been pure *ibāhat* and no distinction between one man's property and another's;[75] no time or age would have been free from disorder [...] If all the wise men of the earth tried to govern and administer a single household or a village through (more) knowledge and traditions of wisdom without the (innate sense of) justice of the just, who are endowed with power, they would not be able to do so. For justice (and) equity are the keystone of all consolidation and order, which are established through the firm commands of the ruler among the people.[76]

In other words, since the king had found himself chosen to perform an [essentially] unIslamic duty, the only way in which he could alleviate his condition, and hope for salvation on the Day of Judgement was by being 'just'. Further, although chosen by Almighty God, the king's divine inspiration is 'mixed with the vile darkness of sins'.[77]

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[73] Mss fol. 17b; text, p. 27; trans., p. 37.
[74] Mss fols 43b-44a; text, p. 66; trans., p. 94.
[75] Steingass, *Dictionary*, p. 3, s.v. *ibāḥat*, explains it as 'permitting, giving liberty, rendering lawful', etc.; Habib, *Political Theory*, p. 16, sees Barani's use of *ibāḥatiān* as 'people of incest', it being a reference to the Ibahatiyahs, a synonym for the Ismailis against whom there was a belief that they practised incest; for their identification with the *tantric* Vamacharis see I.H. Qureshi, 'The Ibahatiyahs', *PIHC*, 6th session, Aligarh, 1943, pp. 201-3; on Ismailis, *EI2*, Vol. 4, pp. 198-206.
[76] Mss fols 44a-b; text, pp. 66-67; trans., p. 95. The importance that Barani places to justice is also evident in an anecdote he narrates later on where 'injustice began to affect even wild animals and beasts, beams and trees, all inhabited places were turned into ruins and the royal treasuries were emptied'; mss fol. 211b; text, p. 288; trans., p. 425.
[77] Mss fol. 17a; text, p. 26; trans., p. 35.

And finally, would a king be able to account 'for the whole world'[78] acting according to the demanding precepts of the *sharī'a* in the affairs of the government without helpers? 'All wise men are agreed that that the king cannot personally perform the entire work of government and administration.'[79] What he needed was 'Right judgement [which] is the lieutenant and viceregent of Divine Inspiration, *rāy-i su'āb nāib-i vahī samāvī va khalīfā-i vahī samāvīst.*'[80] This was accessible through proper counsel from 'wise men' who would thus correct the 'defective' resolves of the king,[81] especially because justice — as derived from God's word — was not easy to translate into practice in any case.[82]

It is important to point out over here that while Barani is clear in separating the offices of a prophet from a king, this seemingly does not entail that religion [*dīn*] and politics [*dunyā*] required separate government; otherwise why would 'wise counsel', i.e., knowledge of the 'Preserved Tablets', be required to run temporal government? The description of 'wise counsel' goes thus: far from being theologians well-versed in the knowledge of the Divine Message of Allah, they were men whose personality embodied both the religious and the worldly — like all true believers, their hearts too should be divinely inspired, but more significantly, they should be people who are 'created for eternal felicity, right and well directed thoughts, which are the surety of the religious as well as worldly welfare ... Such men should comprehend what is going to happen or not, which is inconceivable and engraved (only) on the Preserved Tablets, and they advocate it by arguments and proofs.'[83] Thus, the separation of leadership that Barani creates in governance merges in the identity of the counsellor whose 'well-directed thoughts ... are the surety of *religious* as well as *worldly* welfare'.[84]

Let there be no doubt in the mind of the religion-bearing ruler, that the Prophet himself had said [with reference to consultation] that 'this order was sent from God: "Consult

[78] Mss fols 79a, 205a; text, pp. 115, 280; trans., pp. 161, 412.
[79] Mss fol. 205b; text, p. 281; trans., p. 413.
[80] Mss fol. 20a; text, p. 30; trans., p. 43.
[81] It may be useful to remember that Barani was a 'counsellor' to Muhammad bin Tughluq for 17 years.
[82] Mss fol. 20a; text, p. 30; trans., p. 43. Barani says that right judgement is that which is written in the 'preserved tablets, *lauh-i mahfūz*', deciphering which requires special knowledge. Note that the *Qur'an*, 85:22 says 'Surely this is a glorious Koran, inscribed on a [Preserved] tablet.' *The Koran with a Parallel Arabic Text*, trans. and notes by N.J. Dawood, rpt London, 1998, p. 590, says '[imperishable] tablet'.
[83] Mss fol. 20a; text, pp. 30-31; trans., p. 43.
[84] *Ibid.*

them in your affairs, *vashāvar-i hamm mi al-amr*".'[85] This was, of course, supported by the knowledge of 'all past and present scholars'.[86] Mahmud had read in the 'Testament of Jamshed' that to the kings 'Almighty God has given the sword of earthly power, and for the guidance of [their] hearts, He has given [them] *wazīrs* ....' And Amir Subuktigin, Mahmud's father 'gave Mahmud enormous advice', in accordance with which Mahmud 'settled the affairs of the kingdom with the advice of so many loyal slaves'[87] Hence Barani lists seven counsellors of Mahmud by name.[88] The counsellor's important duties as listed by Barani, it would seem, was helping the king to maintain the *sharīʻa*. The office of the *wazīr* therefore encompassed one of the most important prescriptive jobs: the 'establishment of Truth at the centre' [to which Barani devotes a complete *naṣīhat*] and the execution of Justice in the kingdom, from and of which prosperity would ensue for all.

Not incorrectly one would imagine, then, the *wazīr* — the most important officer of the realm — would be a religious crusader, a man whose thoughts, plans and policies, and recommended actions would uphold the Word and world of Islam. Apart from fear of God, he must possess 'purity and chastity [...] because good counsel does not appear in the hearts of those polluted by sin and iniquity'; and 'perfect discernment [of character, which is] the excellent quality of a man's character to judge'.[89]

The study of the identity of the *wazīr* as constructed by Barani in the *Fatāwā* is worthy of some attention to understand the ruler's performance of justice; one needs to bear in mind constantly that Barani himself occupied the position of a counsellor in the court of Muhammad bin Tughluq for 17 years. As one proceeds through the *Fatāwā*, a clear duality seeps into the narrative centred around the character of the *wazīr* as counsellor.

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[85] Mss fol. 17a; text, p. 26; trans., p. 35.
[86] *Ibid.*, trans., p. 36.
[87] Khan, 'Fatāwā-i-Jahāndārī', p. 516, *n.* 110 believes that the 'Testament of Jamshed' appears not to be extant. This is not surprising since many 'sources' that Barani mentions are figments of his imagination. The reference to the 'Testament of Amir Subuktigin' may be to the *Pandnāma*, as Khan, *ibid.*, p. 519, *n.* 140 suggests as well. The father-son motif is interesting in light of the fact that Barani uses Mahmud's voice as a father addressing his sons throughout the *Fatāwā*, to which we will return in chapter 5. On the *Pandnāma*, see M. Nazim, 'The *Pand-Nāmah* of Subuktigīn', *JRASGBI*, 1933, pp. 605-28. The question of the loyalty of slaves in the history of the Delhi Sultanate is a vexatious issue; the best study for this remains Kumar, 'Emergence of the Delhi Sultanate', though it does not deal with Mahmud of Ghazni in any detail; see also Wink, *Al-Hind*, vol. 2, pp. 79-110, 150-61.
[88] Mss fol. 25b; text, p. 39; trans., p. 54.
[89] Mss fols 22a-b; text, pp. 33-34; trans., pp. 47-48.

What becomes [more] prominent is the text's theological underpinning with regards to the state's role as the upholder of Islam, the foremost identifying characteristic of a good *wazīr* being 'fear of God [otherwise] he will never be inspired with [...] correct judgement, which leads to ultimate good.'[90] This is in consonance with the first duty that Barani lists for kings: to put the 'affairs of the religion on a firm basis'.[91]

This allows Barani to introduce in the text a theme rarely dealt with in any other textual source of the period: the extreme, almost uncontrolled behaviour of the ruler — 'the supreme object of the commanding soul [...] is vanity and wilfulness; [the souls of the kings] because of their tremendous power, become equal in strength to a thousand furious elephants'[92] — one that can only be counterbalanced by seeking wise counsel. Barani had been witness to, or had lived close to, a number of vain and wilful actions of rulers in the Delhi Sultanate — Ala al-Din Khalaji's market reforms, and Muhammad bin Tughluq's shift of capital from Delhi to Daulatabad in the Deccan must count as two incidents that resonate with this attitude.[93] It is important to bear in mind that in the case of the former, it collapsed completely after the death of the Sultan; in the case of the latter, he had to revert his capital back to Delhi after a couple of years.

There is no suggestion in the *Fatāwā* that there is ever a possibility of a *wazīr* superseding the king or usurping the throne [though there are references to the practice and ill-effects of usurpation in Islamic kingship];[94] that would be against the very spirit of the entire text whose underlying theme is the importance of people performing their allotted roles to avoid anarchy in society.[95] The *wazīr*'s role was clearly supportive: the burden of the duties of kingship, a representative, abbreviated responsibility of it being

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90 Mss fol. 22a; text, p. 34; trans., p. 47.
91 Mss fol. 17b; text, p. 27; trans., p. 36; it is impossible to list all the duties that Barani suggests the king to perform since the entire *Fatāwā* is devoted to that exercise, but a good summary appears in *ibid.*
92 Mss fol. 17a; text, p. 26; trans., p. 35. Statements like this one referring to the vanity and arrogance of the king — and the *Fatāwā* has a fair share of them — may hint to an important missing element in the 'Mirrors' *genre*, namely the disappearance [over a period of time] of notes on the problems of service to a ruler which appeared in some of the early Arabic 'Mirrors' of Muqaffa and others as discussed in chapter 3.
93 See Irfan Habib, 'The Price Regulations of Ala-ud-Din Khalji' for Barani's analysis of the market regulations in his *Tārīkh*; and mss fol. 181a; text, p. 250; trans., p. 368: 'When the intent of a powerful enemy has become very great and his resolve has reached the extreme limit and no other means [...] prove effective, the king ought to establish his capital in another territory.'
94 Having read Minhaj's *Tabaqāt* [as he mentions in his *Tārīkh*], he would have surely known of Balban's rise from being *wazīr* to sultan.
95 Mss fol. 96a; text, p. 137; trans., p. 194.

'to keep the seventy-two creeds in a way which is approved by knowledge and reason'[96] were immense, and the *wazīr*/counsellors, who were 'touchstones of knowledge, *muhakam-hā 'almī va 'aqlī-i shar*', were 'men of experience' endowed with proper judgement.[97] Their appointment too was not arbitrary; their wisdom had to be affirmed both by the nobles and the commoners.

The curing of evil, the suppression of mischief, the undertaking of important tasks, the framing of stable regulations, and the discernment of the ultimate good are (all) dependent upon taking counsel, *ke aslāh-i abtarīhā va farunshānand-i fatanhā va pīsh-i nahad kardan kārhā-i buzurg, va bastan zabīthā-i mustaqīm va nazr andākhtan dar 'avāqab-i khīr, nāmashurat-i dānāyān-i sāhab-i tajurbe, ke mukhasan-i daulat va yagāne shadgān-i mulk-i bādshāh bāshand, mahtāj-i alī ast.*[98]

The success of this enterprise was possible through a complementary and fearless interaction between the expression of wise counsel and the king's informed discretion in following it. Mistakes made by a king had severe repercussions 'for by the errors and mistakes of the kings in the affairs of the kingdom, the whole world is uprooted, and turned upside down.'[99] Barani is therefore clear that the ruler should discuss all matters with the wise men of he court: 'when all minds are settled and concentrated on one issue and no controversy remains, they should apply themselves to the execution of their decision. This is known as "consensus of opinion".'[100] Unlike most other issues discussed in the *Fatāwā*, Barani goes into intricate details regarding consensus amongst counsellors. To achieve a consensus of the wise, the king needs to appoint as counsellors men who are equal to one another in the experience of governmental affairs,

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[96] Mss fol. 17b; text, p. 27; trans., p. 36.
[97] Mss fol. 24b; text, p. 37; trans., p. 53. It may be mentioned in brief that the most important voice of authority in the *Fatāwā* [after Mahmud] are 'the wise, men of the ancients, men of knowledge and reason, *hakīms*' who 'speak' frequently. Barani compares counsellors to a physician whose medicines are effective only when he knows 'the character and constitution, the temperament and the disease of his patient'; it underlines his preference for appointing 'men of experience', which ties up with his later advice on the preservation of noble families and those who have been in long service of the court. This is an element that is completely un-researched: namely, the continuities in the *Fatāwā* which span the entire text, and how ideas that have been expressed in one part of the text actually contain the seeds of an idea that germinates much later in the text. Unfortunately, the focus of this dissertation does not allow for such an exercise. Much of the possibility of this exercise has been marred by the edited translation of the text by Habib and Khan which, in many ways, fundamentally altered the cohesion of the original *Fatāwā*.
[98] Mss fol. 17b; text, pp. 26-27; trans., p. 36.
[99] Mss fols 18b-19a; text, pp. 28-29; trans., p. 39.
[100] Mss fol. 23b; text, p. 36; trans., pp. 50-51.

loyalty and favours vis-à-vis the king; their confidence to advise fearlessly is enhanced only if they are made aware of all the 'secrets of the kingdom', and security of their life [so that they need not feel the need to resort to flattery, etc.].[101]

Thus, consensus of opinion in any kingly action is necessary; it stops not only actions born of error or vanity of the king, but also of a single counsellor [Barani warns the ruler against taking the view of any one counsellor only] since 'consensus of opinion is seldom witnessed on a wrong judgement'.[102] It would not be inaccurate to say that in many ways, Barani makes the role of the counsellors in rulership superior to that of the rulers themselves since [a] he is clear in saying that the rulers *must* seek counsel; and [b] that the cumulative opinion of counsellors is never wrong but that of the ruler may be so! He makes the ruler and counsellor seem equal when he says that an individual [whether ruler or counsellor] may have erroneous ideas. In fact, the counsellors seem to be projected as possessing neither terror nor power, neither sin nor vanity, the last making the ruler vulnerable to failure.[103] And for the one and only time, he refers to his brevity, hinting at the importance the issue must have had for him [and thus the unrequiredness of belabouring the point].[104]

The duties that a counsellor is expected to perform are daring, and require alertness, wit and courage to be able to conduct it at all times. There is little that Barani says in terms of how a counsellor should groom himself for the job, considering he himself occupied the position for 17 years.[105] He does however draw attention to the importance of knowing the king's temperament as useful knowledge for counsellors through the example of Ahmad Hasan Maimandi who was 'Mahmud's class-fellow from his very childhood and had a complete understanding of Mahmud's temperament.'[106] Further, Buzurgmihr, the great counsellor of the Sassanian king Anushirvan had said: 'Judgement is a term which is used with reference to the (thoughts of) kings and *wazīr*s

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[101] This is reminiscent of the *c̲h̲ihilgānī* power, it being based on a similar equality. Note that Barani does not alert the ruler to its potential to acquire powers; mss fols 23b-24b; text, pp. 36-38; trans., pp. 49-52.
[102] Mss fol. 18b; text, p. 28; trans., p. 39.
[103] Mss fol. 19a; text, p. 29; trans., pp. 39-40. Also, 'the authority and power inherent in rulership [means that the ruler] is led into errors. It is in this sense that *ḥakīm*s have said: "No advice for kings."' *Ibid.*
[104] Mss fol. 24b; text, p. 37; trans., p. 52: 'It is an endeavour to prolong the explanation of the above, and in order to be brief, I have written only this much here.'
[105] This is perhaps because the *Fatāwā* is a 'Mirror' for rulers.

directed to the management of governmental affairs and important matters.'[107] Proper judgement — which by now we have known Barani to associate with 'justice', focussing on the upholding, enforcement and glorification of the laws and religion of Islam — would thus be an imperative component of good counsellors. Surprisingly, the distinguishing features of Right Judgement of a counsellor do not include any excessive adherence or association with upholding the religion of Islam; in fact, Islam does not even appear in Barani's listing of a good counsellor's qualifications except in general or implied statements like he should not be sinful or iniquitous [should possess 'purity and chastity'], should have fear of God, etc.[108] After such an evidently orthodox and religiously conservative exposition on the religious convictions and proper judgement of the ruler, the latter's most important aide must: consider the good of both sides, ruler and ruled; attend to the possibilities of both success and failure of any issue in which their opinion is sought; ultimate good and not temporary advantage should be the destination; convert hostility into friendship, and try that friends do not turn into adversaries; most people think that the action taken is the correct step and that it is based on contemplation and not on vanity.[109]

Importantly, this preferred Judgement is not just the endowment of fear of and faith in God; 'knowledge of the ancient kings' [Sassanians and other pre-Islamic Persian kings] is another important qualification for a good counsellor. Other attributes included experience in governmental affairs which leads to maturity and judgement; good understanding, a sense of reflection through which he discovers faults and achieves the intended objective; strong-mindedness and constancy; dignified and clement; ungreedy; and, of course, sincerity and loyalty to the king.[110] 'If the chief helpers of the king are adorned with merits' then not only is 'the king honoured through their actions in this world and the next' but also that 'through their conduct all the inhabitants of the kingdom will become the helpers and supporters of the king.'[111]

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[106] Mss fol. 26a; text, p. 39; trans., p. 55. The importance of 'upbringing, *parwarish*' between future rulers and slaves and its effects on service loyalty and bonding has been discussed in detail in Kumar, 'Emergence', pp. 76-164.
[107] Mss fol. 22b; text, p. 34; trans., p. 48.
[108] *Ibid.*
[109] Mss fols 19a-b; text, pp. 28-30; trans., pp. 40-41.
[110] Mss fols 22a-b; text, pp. 33-34; trans., pp. 47-48.
[111] Mss fol. 57a; text, p. 85; trans., pp. 116-17.

'Sincerity and loyalty to the king' is important not just for the obviousness of it, but also because of the fact that 'sincerity and loyalty' to the king did not mean, at least according to Barani over here, a discouragement to speak one's mind since the counsellor's job was to be frank and sensible. This is in contrast to what Barani himself did [not] do whilst travelling with Muhammd bin Tughluq in-between campaigns [referred to earlier].[112]

And then there are some even more surprising, and significant, details. Nowhere else in the *Fatāwā* is there such a concentration of mention of the *ruled* — the political citizenry, as it is over here. Barani insists that the distinguishing features of proper judgement of a counsellor must ensure that 'the accomplishment of an undertaking does not cause detriment to the *religion* of the ruler and his *subjects*'; '*people* feel inclined towards that particular undertaking, and are anxious for its accomplishment and not that its realisation excites the hatred of the people, and they develop an aversion to it'; the benefit of both the ruler and the ruled is the outcome of the exercise.[113] The significance of such statements is important: Barani was writing the *Fatāwā* at the very end of his life and having lived and aged in the subcontinent where Muslim political rule was still neither hegemonic nor universal. To take only one example from the above, if an accomplished scholar like Barani is warning against 'causing detriment to the religion of the ruler and the ruled' in the context of the Delhi Sultanate in the mid-14th century, it must surely include the polytheistic nature of the polity [given Barani's many references to Magians and Hindus, amongst other things], and the need for the rulers to be politic, if not outright careful! In such circumstances it would be worth pondering over the presence of the political citizenry *not* through ordinary mention in the text but in the context of the result/impact of the 'judgement' of this most important state official.[114]

Interestingly, to elaborate on this delicate issue of counselling, Barani invokes pre-Islamic historical examples. He cites as model rulers Solomon [the prophet] and Alexander, whom he refers to as a 'saint'; for both of them 'government and rulership were means of elevating the spiritual status of kings and securing the salvation of their

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[112] *Tārīkh*, pp. 516-17, for Barani's restraint in giving his frank opinion to Muhammad bin Tughluq.
[113] Mss fol. 19b; text, p. 30; trans., p. 41. The question of citizens is discussed in chapter 6.
[114] This question will be dealt with in greater detail in chapter 6.

subjects.'[115] But it is not possible for a ruler to be just in his governance — especially given the fact that the practice of 'justice' encompassed almost *all* acts of governance in some way or other — without the 'greatest gift' that God can bestow [after Prophethood and Saintship], namely '*wazīr*s [counsellors] of perfect intelligence'.[116] Thus Asif Barkhiya [to Solomon] and Aristotle [to Alexander] were 'men whose judgements were composed of right thinking and rectitude and no error.'[117] Because of this, their kingdoms prospered, and the kings were able to forsake 'ideas sullied with desire, power and terror [... and] such a king is crowned with success in this world, and will also be honoured with high heavenly grades in the next world.'[118]

Barani's choice of a prophet and a 'saintly' ruler as examples to elaborate the supremacy of the knowledge of the 'Preserved Tablet' reflects the contested nature of political rulership functioning under the broader religious umbrella that has eternally plagued writers of political Islam. For the purpose of the arguments of this dissertation it is important to constantly bear in mind this conflation of the theological prescriptions for governance with the need for applied knowledge even when they appear religious. In other words, while Barani never abandons the position that there is only one Knowledge [which is religious] for the rightness of the world, he constantly urges the rulers towards striving for a polity whose success and prosperity is subject to required practice and dating from pre-Islamic times. Many complex issues remain unaddressed: how is someone who is non-Muslim [pre-Islamic rulers] to be seen as a 'saint', and if yes, then what does it mean to be a 'saint' in Islam; what are the precise paths to knowledge that are holy and unquestionably perfect; and deriving from the title of this text, do the many worlds [*jahān*] that interest Barani actually separate, or merge?

[115] Mss fol. 20b; text, p. 31; trans., p. 43. The 'salvation of the subjects' is an important inclusion here since later Barani underlines the importance of the *unanimous* agreement of the *wazīr*'s wisdom by both 'nobles and commoners', underlining the important responsibility that a *wazīr* owed to the subject population at large. Cf. mss fol. 21b; text, p. 33; trans., p. 46.
[116] Mss fol. 20b; text, p. 31; trans., p. 4. See also mss fol. 21b; text, p. 33; trans., p. 45; where he quotes the 'ancients' having said: 'A king without a *wazīr* is like a bread without salt.'
[117] *Ibid.* It is interesting to note that Barani has no objections to giving examples of pre-Islamic rulers — he later cites the Sassanian kings Ardashir Babakan and Anushirvan, and their *wazīr*s Abr Sam and Buzurgmihr, though here he hastens to add the caveat 'although they neglected the True Faith' — as model rulers/counsellors. The Islamic example comes in the form of Caliph Umar, from a fictional text entitled *Ma'āsir-i Umārī*. Mss fols 21b-22a; text, pp. 33-34; trans., pp. 46-47. See Khan, 'Fatāwā-i-Jahāndārī', p. 518, *n.* 127 for *Ma'āsir-i Umārī* being a fictional text. See also *EIr*, Vol. 2, s.v. 'Ardhasir Babakan', pp. 382-83.
[118] Mss fol. 21b; text, p. 33; trans., p. 45.

As one proceeds, contestations begin to multiply not just between offices, but within the same office: the person of the king, for obvious reasons, is most scrutinised, and emerges as being the most contested! Having established somewhat unproblematically that kingship is now a necessary evil that Islam has to live with, Barani's prescriptions for the king are clear and straightforward. Upholding the banner of Islam at any cost in the hope of correct answerability on the Day of Judgement would absolve him from the sin of having spent his entire life in a vocation innately opposed to the dictates of 'submission' to Allah. Barani declares [via Mahmud]:

O Sons of Mahmud, know and know well, that the success and failure of administrative and governmental affairs of a Muslim king depends upon his good and bad religious faith, *maslih-i mulk o daulat-i pādshāh-i musalmān bar basteye i'tiqād-i khūb ra jusht-i pādshāh ast* [...] Due to the blessings of the king's faith and firmness in it, his affairs of state succeed, and the objects and the needs of his subjects are also satisfied by God.[119]

While the prosperity of the kingdom may depend on the good judgement of his wise counsel, it does not reduce the need for the king to be of 'good religious faith', for it is because of the blessings of his faith 'and his firmness in it' that the needs of his kingdom are fulfilled by God. Here, an important idea in Barani's political scaffolding falls into place: God is not just responsible for the appointment of the ruler, but the success born from the correct religious devotion of the ruler are *in fact* 'satisfied by God'. The role of wise counsel is added to this. Thus, if there is a direct correlation between the devotion of the ruler and the prosperity of the kingdom, there is an implicit subversion of political authority as well. The attributes of kingship are never sufficient for the king to be effective on his own, his authority and success being dependent in large measure on some other temporal or transcendental powers. And this idea — that kingship is at best a compromised position of privilege and power — manifests itself latently and overtly in a number of other things mentioned by Barani: his disapproval of the vanity of kings, his fear of the danger of the king becoming reckless, extreme or uncontrolled in his actions; the vulnerability of the king vis-à-vis his subjects, because people are evil and influenced by Satan; his constraints as an earthly ruler and

[119] Mss fol. 6b; text, p. 10; trans., p. 12.

helplessness against heavenly [natural] calamities; etc.[120] In fact, despite its religious exterior, from the outset the *Fatāwā* contemplates one of the most important questions of political rulership: the possible limitations to the effective powers of a king in his rule of political governance, a question dealt by none other writers of his time. The most eloquent example of this comes from a conversation between Haroun al-Rashid and Fuzail Ayaz — 'one of the pious men of the day' — according to whom the caliph Umar too had regretted his inability to wipe out the 'molestors of the Faith' because of their 'large numbers'. More importantly, Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet, had once advised the caliph Umar regarding going to war with the rulers of Ajam in person. Barani's ['Abbas's'] statement, '[m]aybe that the army is going to be defeated this time also' suggests not only the apprehension of possible defeat, but also the fact of earlier defeats which they had endured ['...this time also'].[121]

But what is perhaps more significant is that while all these variables may have held true for the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate, and especially for Muhammad bin Tughluq, Barani's ideas about this subjective position of the king seem to be unreflective of this reality. In fact, his *Tārīkh* seems to suggest that rulers in the Delhi Sultanate were far more authoritative in their decisions and actions and dismissive of counsel; and so unquestioned was this position that [ironically] Barani himself was unable to speak his mind to Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq when the latter purportedly asked Barani why his kingdom was so 'diseased' with rebellions![122]

'Truth, *ḥaqq*'[123] is another complex, multi-layered concept that Barani uses in the *Fatāwā*: not only does it overlap with the idea of religious justice, but Barani makes it clear from the outset that it is a relative position to sustain, identifiable only through the

[120] Mss fols 23a, 17a, 2b-3a and 91b; text, pp. 35, 26, 3-4 and 132; trans., pp. 49, 35, 3-4 and 185, and *passim*.
[121] Mss fols 14a, 16a, 29a-b; text, pp. 21, 24, 43-44; trans., pp. 29, 33, 62. The anecdote, even if false, draws attention to the minority status of the Muslim ruling class in the lands where they ruled. A similar example comes from the Delhi Sultanate in another [unpublished] text by Barani, when Nizam al-Mulk Junaidi, the *wazīr* of Sultan Shams al-Din Iltutmish (1210-36) asks him to not be insistent on following the policy of 'death or Islam' towards non-Muslims since Muslims were still like 'salt [in a large dish]' in the subcontinent. Cf., Nurul Hasan, 'Sahīfā-i Na'at-i Muhammadī', Appendix, pp. 103-5. See also mss fol. 183a; text, p. 252; trans., p. 372, where Barani speaks of the possibility of the victory of the 'wicked'.
[122] *Tārīkh*, pp. 516-17: 'My kingdom is diseased, and no treatment cures it [...] What have former kings said about these disorders?'
[123] Cf., Steingass, *Dictionary*, pp. 424-25, s.v. *ḥaqq*. It is an Arabic word with a broad semantic arena, deeply infused with religious righteousness; [importantly for the *Fatāwā*] it can be used to mean 'justness', 'truth', 'correctness', 'rectitude', 'equity', 'law', 'reason', etc. *Ibid.*

existence and identification of its opposite. After commanding the rulers to strive towards the 'establishment of Truth', Barani [via Mahmud] is quick to add that

The meaning of 'Truth being established at the Centre' is not that falsehood totally disappears and truth alone remain in the world [...] For if all prophets and sultans collect together and try to remove and eliminate falsehood [...] so that only Truth, which is Islam [...] may prevail, they most certainly will not be able to succeed. For it is not within the bounds of possibility that there should be only virtue in this world and no evil, [...] only Islam and belief in the Unity of God and no *kufr* and *shirk*, for Truth becomes evident because of the existence of falsehood [...] Islam because of the existence of *kufr* [...] 'All things become distinguishable because of their opposites.' [...] So the real meaning of 'Truth being established at the Centre' is that Truth is to prevail over falsehood [...] so that the glory of belief in the unity of God, the prestige of Islam, and the humiliation of *shirk* and the worthlessness of *kufr* (may be) realised.[124]

The passage makes evident a number of interesting things. The *Fatāwā* is very clear in reiterating constantly that Truth should be 'established at the Centre, *dar markaz qarār gīrad*' and not in the entire realm or world; in chapter 6 we will return to Barani's peculiarly interesting association with the capital city, and how he views it within the larger political map of the kingdom. For the time being, however, it is enough to draw attention to the point because implicit in it is the suggestion that there are limits to what can be achieved through political rule, even for the cause of Islam. He leaves us in no doubt when he says that even if all 'prophets and sultans, *anbiyā va salātīn*' came together they would not be able to remove falsehood entirely. Thus, prophethood and kingship together are not enough for the complete triumph of Islam; or, to put it in another way, no one can hope to totally eradicate infidelity, *kufr*, and idolatry, *shirk*: the context of the subcontinent and the sidelining of religious Islam [in favour of political Islam] is all too clearly embedded in Barani's exposition.

At the same time, the language he uses makes it easy to dub him as an orthodox theologian/religious fanatic: the king should devote himself 'to the slaughter of the mass of the leaders of *kufr*, who in the realm of Hind are Brahmans, *ke dar dayār-i hind* [...] *kufr barahmanān and*', 'enemies of the Orthodox Faith are to remain suppressed and desperate', 'the glory of holy campaigns and holy wars, dwells in the hearts of men', 'infidelity loses dignity', the 'traditions and practices of the enemies of the *sharī'a* are

[124] Mss fols 117b-118b; text, pp. 164-65; trans., pp. 235-36.

overthrown', amongst other things. Also, how will the tradition 'I have been ordered to fight all people until they say, "There is no God but Allah" ... be enforced?'[125] Certainly, taking *jizya* and *kharāj* from the *zimmīs* and allowing them to continue with their unIslamic practices is no good, especially when their own rulers [*rāīs*] tax them more than what the Muslim rulers tax them.[126]

Cumulatively, then, what Barani is saying is that while there will never be a situation that all falsehood has been abolished and only Islam reigns the world, that should not be reason for the king of Islam to rest with taking protection and minority taxes from his non-Islamic subjects. He should, in fact, wage constant war otherwise he will find it difficult to give answers on the Day of Judgement. The problems [for rulers of the subcontinent] in such suggestions are many, and they are multiplied in the entire text itself. Typically, a lot of Barani's advice contradict one another, and he never really grapples with any of the contradictions. In the above scenario, for instance, while on the one hand the ruler has to answer 'for all his subjects' on the Day of Judgement, he will also have to account for his actions [or non-actions] as the case may be.

Barani's advice are quite obviously located in the context of the Delhi Sultanate. His attack on Brahmans, and his mention of Rais as Hindu rulers underlines the important political geography against which the diktats of the *Fatāwā* are supposed to function. At its peak — the reigns of the Khalajis and Tughluqs, and the life-time of Barani — the Delhi Sultanate was a loosely structured polity with varying degrees of loyalty and submission of little kingdoms to central [Delhi] authority. This allowed the 'state' to recover enough resources from the larger realm to sustain a bureaucracy, but the returns were often hostile, uneven and fluctuating. So Barani's reference to the *rāīs* exacting more taxes reflects the deep-seated problem of rebellions and uprisings that came to a peak in the reign of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq. The all-out cry for 'establishment of Truth' contains within it as much the impossibility of it, as it does the constant need to reiterate it in the face of recurrent and potentially debilitating opposition to the very existence of the sultanate both from within and from outside [Mongols].[127]

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125 Mss fols 17b-18a, 118b; text, pp. 26-28, 165; trans., pp. 36-37, 237.

126 *Ibid.* '... they take a hundred more taxes from the Hindus of their provinces and territories, *sad qismat dīgar bar hinduān-i vilāyat va 'arsāt-i khūbash mi kunand.*'

127 Perhaps because of the normative nature of the *Fatāwā*, it makes no mention of the Mongols as a possible threat to the Delhi Sultanate. On this question, and especially with regards to the period of

'Invasions and uprisings' are important indicators of a 'diseased' kingdom. Barani's advice to rulers when a kingdom is diseased is succint, uncompromising, and blunt:

If on account of the vicissitudes of time, the kingdom is thrown into confusion and diseases crop up in the realm, then providing remedies for them is expedient. If in spite of these remedies the disease increases, then death is inevitable. If the cure is effective, it is a symptom of survival.[128]

Significantly, an important way to cure the diseases which afflict a kingdom, according to Barani, is 'by listening to the advice of *wazīrs*, *ḥakīms* and wise men'.[129]

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Thus, the role that the *Fatāwā* allots to the king's counsel is so widespread that it leaves the reader in no doubt that kingship was impossible without counsellors. And it is here that an important twist appears in the composition of the *Fatāwā*: good counsellors are those whose wisdom is attested to by both nobles and commoners, who are fearless in speaking their mind and not compromising in order to protect their own privileges, who are endowed with right judgement, whose advice will help the king in attaining his goal of upholding the faith of Mustafa, whose sense of justice dominates over everything else, and — in short — one who is in fact the embodiment of all the ingredients of a properly administered *dar al-Islām*, *except* that he is not a ruler but a counsellor. The *wazīr*'s decisions inform every tier and part of the polity, and his advice to the king determines right from wrong, according to Barani. He is thus marked by his excellence and extraordinariness in all things of the politically governed world: 'taking counsel [is] the very foundation of all governmental affairs.'[130]

One of the arguments of this chapter is that the conservative strain in Barani's *Fatāwā* — 'you (should) treat the enemies of God and His religion as your enemies and keep

Muhammad bin Tughluq, see Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate*, pp. 255-77, and *idem*, 'The Mongols and the Delhi Sultanate in the Reign of Muhammad Tughluq', *CAJ*, 19, 1975, pp. 118-57.
[128] Mss fol. 178b; text, p. 246; trans., p. 363. Note also the conversation from the *Tārīkh* cited earlier.
[129] *Ibid.*
[130] Mss fol. 24a; text, p. 37; trans., p. 51.

them as your enemies'[131] — whilst not being unrepresentative of his ideas or inclinations, needs to be played against various other details in the text itself. This potted summary of his enumeration of the office of the king and the counsellor underlines the extremely contested nature of political Islam and rulership in the subcontinent. The last section of this chapter seeks to amplify this further through a re-portrayal of the role of the Islamic king in the *Fatāwā*, by focussing on the 'political' role of the king as opposed to his 'religious' role.

The Politics of Kingship

O sons of Mahmud, know and know well, that kingship is not possible without adopting the customs and traditions of the kings of Ajam. Hence how can any king who [...] uses these religiously (forbidden things) [...] consider himself a Mussulman, can get himself called a Mussulman, and can rationally entertain the hope of salvation in the next world in his heart?[132]

Alexander [said]: [Ancient kings] were tyrants and Pharaohs [...] They laid claims to divinity as they did not care for the promotion of religion and the good order. No king, who claims to be religious will follow those whom God has damned.[133]

Mahmud says: O sons of Mahmud and kings of Islam, if you claim to belong to Muhammad's faith and consider yourselves to be true believers and Mussulmans, you will consider this tradition of kingship to be a grievous evil, misfortune, calamity and untoward incident. You should reflect with a clear mind how this bad practice and wicked custom has become customary among the kings of Islam.[134]

The above quotes underline the agonised relationship that Barani and his *Fatāwā* have with the institution of kingship. The constant tension between the unIslamic-ness of kingship, and its necessity in the organisation of the community in Islam informs almost the entire text. This section revisits the question of kingship in the *Fatāwā* with an admittedly different objective, that of highlighting the 'advice' in the text regarding the *political performance of kingship*, albeit within the mould of religious righteousness. It will therefore outline an alternative meaning of those very ideas that have been referred

[131] Mss fol. 121b; text, p. 169; trans., p. 243.
[132] Mss fols 100a-b; text, pp. 142-43; trans., pp. 202-3.
[133] Mss fols 34b-35a; text, p. 53; trans., p. 75.

to in the previous section, and also provide further evidence to suggest the political nature of kingly duties as outlined in the *Fatāwā*; in so doing, this section questions the certitude of considering religious Islam as the dominant motif of kingship or the *Fatāwā*.

It would not be incorrect to say that justice is the discursive motif of the *Fatāwā*; and so it is useful to start again with justice, the primary performative arena of kingship according to the *Fatāwā*. It does not need belabouring any further that according to the *Fatāwā* justice and religious righteousness are intertwined, that each is a necessary condition for the other. Thus, logically, the king must constantly strive towards upholding the two, and then and only then would there be proper [Islamic] governance.

But as one looks deeper into the text, the religious motif is no longer as uncomplicatedly manifest. The *Fatāwā* contains many examples of how the execution of justice was multi-dimensional, many of which were completely unreligious and, in fact, purely political in nature. The religious garb that such acts wore was more a form of articulation rather than an actual theological affirmation. One of the most important parts of the *Fatāwā* deals with the advantages of cheapening of prices of essential goods by the ruler. 'The lowering of prices should not be seen as something trivial. Kings should regard the cheapening of prices of the means of general livelihood to be the cornerstone of the administration of their kingdom and the dispensation of justice.'[135] Here, justice is divested of its religious righteousness and encoded with a more temporal, politico-administrative reality. It is important also to bear in mind the many examples where the contents of justice are seen to be in the service of politics, often covertly but sometimes overtly as well; we will turn to these shortly.

Barani often returns to the question of religion and its maintenance by the ruler. How does the *Fatāwā*, then, interweave politics into the religious idea of justice? Where and how do the borders merge and the boundaries emerge, if at all they do? And if they don't, then does politics become a religious act or would it be more accurate to ask if religion becomes a political act? Or neither? Barani provides no clear answers to any of

[134] Mss fol. 224a; text, p. 307; trans., p. 453.
[135] Elsewhere, he calls price control the 'highest stage of justice'. Mss fols 92a, 101a; text, pp. 132, 143; trans., pp. 186, 204.

these questions. But there is enough evidence in the *Fatāwā* to make a case for a reconsideration of the nature of advice that appear in the text. This exercise is worthwhile, in fact essential, to the analysis of the *Fatāwā* which [as suggested in chapter 2] shows enough evidence for the impact of education and elitism that informed all prosopographical writings of the time. Yet, through the ink of an astute pen these very generic and standard patterns, if done tactfully, would allow for the creation of textual spaces where alternative meanings could be implicitly inserted. Barani, with his years of first-hand experience in politics and background of being a very well-read scholar, could achieve this easily.

Yet it was not straightforward to covertly insert 'insidious' meanings; the *Fatāwā* is not a puzzle. What one finds in it is actually far more complex and contested: namely, the *orientation* of an overtly religious message — justice — for those very unreligious purposes — kingship — that the *Fatāwā* laments elsewhere as being unIslamic. It is interesting that the organising axis of this tension is 'justice', because that was the component most clearly identified with pre-Islamic (especially Sassanian) political rulership. This is confirmed by the number of instances where Barani refers to Anushirvan and the Khusraus as examples to be emulated by later (Islamic) rulers.

Barani's rich tapestry of performative duties for the king is the ground where all these tensions were constantly organised and reorganised. What is particularly interesting is the *constant* nature of this tension, its palpability for the reader making it an almost tangible textual reality. The actions of the king were seen as weapons and became the main armoury for the creation of political space by Barani in the *Fatāwā.* This was perhaps essential because unlike 'Islam' which was a set of givens that the believer/ruler could submit to, 'justice' was something that had to be realised through one's own actions, or in this case, the prescriptions outlined in the *Fatāwā.* Beyond the obvious, then, acts of justice could differ both in content and intent; and this difference provided a forum for versatile actions through which the 'religious' and the 'political' could be achieved. The following arguments are an exploratory exercise towards such an understanding.

Whether it is rulership bestowed by God, controlling crime and other vices, regulating morals in the kingdom, cheapening prices of commodities, preserving the privileges of the high-born, keeping the low-born in their lowly place, recognising the importance of heredity amongst the supporters of the king, upholding 'Truth', spending Time in the correct manner, or more demonstrably religious acts like actively executing the commands of the *sharīʿa*, suppressing heresy, idolatry and blasphemy, etc. — *all* these, and others, were part of the proper governance of the realm. What is significant is that the *Fatāwā* ties *each* of these actions — directly or indirectly — with the performance of 'justice'. By treating 'justice', in all its performed manifestations, as the primary motif of the text it allows the author to orgainse the various kingly duties *through* 'justice'. If we see Barani's use of 'justice' as a multi-layered category, then religious correctness runs through it; thus *all* the layers are imbued with a certain sense of 'Islam'. *However,* it being multi-layered means that there are some actions which are more easily and overtly interpretable as Islamic; these are usually the more manifestly conservative and acerbic advice that invoke images of bigotry and fanaticism in the reader's mind. But this section will suggest that there are many other prescribed actions that are more political in nature, with the religious overtone being a minor, sometimes incidental, referent. This allowed Barani to create a political space in the text by constantly alternating between the unIslamic and Islamic reality of the institution of kingship; the fact that it was being written in the Delhi Sultanate made this contested religious interplay in the *Fatāwā* an important consideration for the author.

'It is the duty of the king to strive to the utmost in the enforcement of justice'.[136] The just acts of the king would lead to general prosperity in the realm, and others — his own subordinates, officers of the state, and the people at large — would also do 'good deeds', all of which may be 'credited to the actions of the king'.[137] Politically, therefore, the performance of justice is tied to all else through the links of the governmental hierarchy, flowing from top to bottom, and thereafter in all directions. The importance and severity of this idea is evident in his position that 'Perfect justice is a necessary condition of monarchy and the supreme command';[138] in fact, Barani suggests that as long as there is any form of injustice being practised anywhere in the realm of the king,

[136] Mss fols 46a-b; text, pp. 69-70; trans., pp. 99-100.
[137] Mss fol. 46a; text, p. 69; trans., p. 99.
[138] *Ibid.*

he cannot be called 'just': 'The king is only just when no injustice remains in his country, and all the oppressors are finished once for all. If in the kingdom of the king one person is a tyrant, and his tyranny continues permanently inspite of the king's knowledge, then the king is not just [...].'[139] This points not only to the extremity of Barani's position, but takes our discussion of kingship in other directions: that 'injustice' refers to 'oppression', that the prosperity of the kingdom is the cumulative result of the actions of all peoples which, in the context of the Delhi Sultanate would presumably include the mass of non-Muslim subjects, and following from that, that 'just' actions may not necessarily be 'Islamic', a point underlined by his reference to 'oppression' and 'tyranny'. The confused reality of it is evident in a question that Alexander asks Aristotle in the *Fatāwā*: 'Justice and oppression are two contrary epithets which are not combined in one order in one sitting. How is it then, that in some kings and rulers the two qualities are found co-mingled?' Barani's answer is typical: if justice is innate in a ruler, then he can never be truly unjust, but there are some instances in which he may *need* to be 'oppressive'. Interestingly, one such instance is the cheapening of prices of commodities![140]

The idea of justice therefore needs to be relocated in a politico-administrative scaffolding in order to realise the full import of its usage as the organising axis of the text and of kingship. One cannot deny the implicit, and overt, religious strain in these suggestions; through justice the king can keep in restraint 'the hands of the oppressors, the tyrants, the powerful, the rebellious, the Godless, and highway robbers and thieves from the wealth and property of the weak, the obedient and the helpless.'[141] But it is important to draw attention to Barani's use of non-religious, cosmopolitan categories like 'obedient', 'helpless' and 'weak' as well.

The important purpose that this serves for the articulation of kingship is that upholding the Faith is thus not the *only* rewarding performance for the ruler; it is the entirety of his service that will be accountable on the Day of Judgement, and to attain a place in Paradise he must have been a perfectly just ruler. The religious fervour of the ruler — both personal and official — is thus underlaid with other more pragmatic and practical

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[139] Mss fol. 46b; text, p. 70; trans., p. 100.
[140] Mss fol. 47a; text, p. 71; trans., p. 101.
[141] Mss fol. 44b; text, p. 67; trans., pp. 95-96.

realities; conversely, it becomes possible to suggest that the ruler's devotion to upholding the Faith does not determine in full the prosperity, health and longevity of his rule. Such things being subject to the actions of others in the kingdom also means that 'kingship' is an office which far exceeds the actions of the ruler alone; Barani's insistence on the king to be just does not refer to him alone, but by embodying the ideal he becomes an example for his subjects to emulate. 'And so far as justice is concerned [...] it permeates all the inhabitants of the kingdom, and they take to the path of justice. It is a long time since it was uttered: "People follow the *religion* of their rulers."'[142] In the context of the Delhi Sultanate, the 'religion of their rulers' is an important link in the dissemination of justice emanating from the king and spreading outwards to the subjects. Given the geographical context of the text, it seems possible to suggest that the 'religion' referred to here may not necessarily be the religion of Islam but the ethic of justice.

It is interesting also to note that the imagery that Barani uses for a ruler pursuing such justness — disturbed sleep — is the same that he uses while discussing the ruler's worries regarding the health of his army ['he is unable to sleep according to his desire'].[143] This is important because the army emerges as the 'chief pivot, *sarmāye*' of kingship and political rule elsewhere in the text.[144]

Just actions of the king secure other unIslamic spaces for him as well: early in the text, Barani says that when one compares the good deeds and prayers which 'his justice, beneficence, power and glory, *'adl o ahsān o quwwat o shaukat-i ū*,' makes possible, 'what do the sins of a single soul matter, *gunaḥ-i yek nafs-i ū kujā barāyad*.' And again, 'those [i.e., rulers] who have not been created (exclusively) for worship and offer their devotions (to God) with perseverance and effort, sometimes worship is witnessed from them and sometimes sins are observed.'[145] We will have occasion to return to the sinful activities of the king in the next chapter. For now, it is important to consider the other resonances of these statements. Importantly, while there is a recognition of a baser self in the king himself — one that commits sin — it does not override the greatness that is

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[142] Mss fols 96b-97a; text, pp. 137-38; trans., pp. 195-96. Barani makes the same argument about the capital city which should be upheld as an ideal for the outer realms to follow. This is discussed in more detail in the chapter 6.
[143] Mss fols 166b, 66a; text, pp. 230, 97; trans., pp. 339, 136.
[144] Mss fols 66b, 93a, 133b; text, pp. 98, 134, 182; trans., pp. 136, 188, 263.

achieved through the creation of a prosperous, governed realm because 'if the quality of justice is innate in kings and predominant in their actions, no virtue, after prophethood, is higher and purer than kingship', and only then can he become the 'shadow of God or be considered a legitimate ruler'.[146]

Innate justice is one of the most important attributes of a ruler. Out of the 20 characteristic features that 'wise men' have mentioned as identifying features of innate justice in the *Fatāwā*, it is significant that only 2 have an overtly religious tone: that such a ruler 'acts in obedience to obligatory divine prescriptions', and 'his mind is averse to disgracing the honour of the just and defaming the peaceful (Mussalmans)'. All the others are clearly 'secular' and political attributes which, in summary, require unbiasedness, clarity of perspective and thought, balance, kindness and compassion, and [importantly] the first attribute is 'kinship with the oppressed, protection of the weak, hatred for the unjust and enmity towards oppressors'. Finally, 'according to the kings of today, and yesterday, the meaning of justice is creating equality and seeking equality between the two litigants.'[147] It should be cause for no surprise that religion is not mentioned here, especially when one thinks that Barani is deriving the meaning of justice not just from the practices of Islamic ['today'] but pre-Islamic ['yesterday'] kings as well.

The pursuit of political justice is of two kinds according to the *Fatāwā*: individual equality and public equality. The former concerns enforcing equality between the plaintiff and the defendent, while the latter is one which necessarily requires an element of piety [found only in the time of the orthodox caliphs]. Public equality concerns only the ruler who even as king passes his days in poverty, death, disappointment and indigence. He does not take more than what he requires, and he seeks equality with his slaves in food and dress. But this unity of opposites — bringing together kingship and poverty — ended with the period of the four rightly-guided caliphs. Now it was no longer possible for rulers — even Mahmud — to keep people in obedience whilst 'living like derwishes'.[148] Thus, other accoutrements were required to adorn this role, so

145 Mss fols 7b; text, p. 11; trans., p. 14.
146 Mss fols 46a, 92b; text, pp. 69, 133; trans., pp. 99, 188.
147 For reasons of space I have chosen not to list all the attributes but see mss fols 133b-135a, text, pp. 182-84; trans., pp. 263-66.
148 Mss fol. 136a; text, p. 185; trans., p. 269.

that people could be kept in obedience to the orders of the ruler. The acquisitive position of justice was therefore as 'Islamic' as it is 'political'.

This brings into focus another essential component of kingship: 'legitimacy'. In the pre-modern world, 'legitmacy' of political rule was a complex phenomenon. While territory could be, and mostly was, acquired through military action of some degree, the important thing — at least according to the *Fatāwā*— was the *maintenance* of the dignity of command, so that 'obedience to rule' [with which the text opens] could be retained. Such a position of command certainly required things which went far beyond the limited, straitjacket roles required from a king of the Faith. Grandeur, titles, magnanimity, rewards, recognitions, gifts, all added to the honour and power of the just king and his position of authority. 'If [the king] does not equip himself and his helpers with power and prestige, it will be impossible for him to rule.'[149]

Barani's long list of the unIslamic components of Islamic kingship includes these and similar things bequeathed from Sassanian institutions as prerequisites for 'power and prestige', ones that the ruler is urged to adopt, albeit as an exigency. In the previous section, the changing world of Islam had meant that the nature of kingship had altered from the time of the Prophet onwards. As there was more and more corruption and the Day of Judgement grew closer and closer, the virtues of those earlier times were being 'transformed into vice [...] and the lower self and Satan' were gaining the upper hand over mankind.[150] This altered scenario required not just new forms of leadership, but props that would otherwise have been considered unIslamic. Stewart Gordon suggests in *Robes and Honor* that

> in the early years, the fierce monotheism of Islam, espousal of the Prophet, and ideological egalitarianism were enough to tie together men of different language, ethnic background and family. Once Islam developed into larger state structures [...] additional mechanisms were needed to tie groups in loyalty [...]

[149] Mss fol. 47a; text, p. 71; trans., p. 101.
[150] Mss fols 96a-b; text, pp. 137-38; trans., pp. 194-95.

And he continues, with regards to ceremonial robing, which was one such pre-Islamic tradition that was manifest in Islamic kingship, that

> if we trace the rapid Muslim conquest of the 7th-8th centuries, all of them were in preexisting 'regions of robing' defined by the Byzantine and Sasanian Empires. Thus, honorific investiture had for two centuries been an established, complex ceremony, full of meanings [...] It does not seem surprising, therefore, that the ceremony became central to all the states that developed out of Islamic conquests.[151]

Kingly grandeur and pomp was central to the maintenance of authority and power: crown, throne, pride, aloofness, singularity of status, etiquette, monumental architecture, lavish courts, wearing gold, jewels and silk (and making others wear them through robing ceremonies), large harems, extravagance, etc. are all recommended by the *Fatāwā* as required, despite their definite unIslamicness.[152] This singularity of status was also buoyed by the many non-religious 'necessary conditions' that the sultans of Islam were expected to possess or cultivate: 'manliness, eloquence, quickness of intellect [...]'.[153] [Plate 8]

This grandeur and pomp formed an important element in the translation of the power of royalty and kingship. In the *Fatāwā*, this 'ceremonial metalanguage' [to use Gordon's phrase] worked in many ways; for instance, it served Barani's purpose to underline the importance of retaining social hierarchies: the ruler must treat people in accordance with the grades allotted to them 'in all matters pertaining to the bestowal of robes, gifts [...]'; and a little later, that in the bestowal of 'robes and gifts upon them [notables] and their honour and dignity, I [Anushirvan]

[151] Gordon, *Robes and Honor*. For the Delhi Sultanate in particular, see Gavin R.G. Hambly, 'From Baghdad to Bukhara, from Ghazna to Delhi: The *Khil'a* Ceremony in the Transmission of Kingly Pomp and Circumstance', in *ibid.*, especially pp. 200-15. Apart from the mention of robes as gift from the king to nobles [cf. mss fols 59a, 64a, 163b, 171b; text, pp. 88, 94, 226, 238; trans., 121, 130, 331, 351 and *passim*], the *Fatāwā* has some other interesting references to it; cf. mss fols 33a, 155b; text, pp. 50, 214; trans., pp. 71, 313, where 'right resolve' is referred to as the 'robe of rulership', and Mamun distributing robes to 'absconders'!
[152] Mss fols 99a-101a; text, pp. 140-42; trans., pp. 201-3.
[153] Mss fol. 168b; text, p. 234; trans., p. 343; notice the 'display' of the robe in Plate 8.

Plate 8

'Mahmud of Ghazni donning a Robe from the Caliph, 999 AD'

[From Or. Ms. 20, fol. 121r, Edinburgh University Library, printed in Gavin Hambly, 'From Baghdad to Bukhara, from Ghazna to Delhi: The *khil'a* Ceremony in the Transmission of Kingly Pomp and Circumstance', in Stewart Gordon, ed., *Robes and Honor: The Medieval World of Investiture*, New York, 2001, p. 202.]



have not resorted to any camel and cat incongruity while showing favour and kindness to them.'[154]

Elsewhere, while describing the meanings of politics, *siyāsat*, Barani says that one variety consists of 'benevolence, compassion, favours, gifts, rewards, bounties and kindness for through such dealings many people of the kingdom are set right, become prosperous and remain prosperous.'[155] Importantly, this gift-giving did not relate to only the privileged: while describing their daily routine, the *Fatāwā* says that the ruler should spend the fourth quarter of the day 'granting gifts to beggars, the needy and the destitute'.[156] Thus, the giving of gifts — both ceremonial and every day — played an important part in the consolidation of rulership amongst various echelons of the subject-citizenry. The benevolence of the ruler was the overt manifestation of this public act, a *double entendre* that also upheld the greatness of kingship. The fact that not everyone in the realm — whether rich or poor — received gifts from the ruler made it all the more coveted, and [at least in texts] could be seen as an indicator to personalise and solidify this inter-relationship.[157]

The giving of gifts was, of course, not the only personification of the greatness of political kingship. 'Living with royal dignity and grandeur', whether he be with his wives and children or otherwise, was an important consideration; it was, in fact, closely connected with respect that the ruler himself allotted to the position. So Mahmud says to Qadr Khan,

I have been living for so many years with grandeur and dignity [...] with (my countrymen), foreigners, wives, children, brothers, relations, courtiers, well-wishers and the nobles. I have not

[154] It is interesting that this is part of a 'testament' of Anushirvan — another fictional creation by Barani — since the idea of gift-giving is derived from the Sassanians. Mss fols 59a, 163a-b; text, pp. 87, 226; trans., pp. 120-21, 331.
[155] Mss fol. 141b; text, p. 194; trans., p. 281.
[156] This is part of an advice Aristotle gave to Alexander about how the latter should be spending his time. Mss fol. 107a; text, p. 151; trans., p. 216.
[157] The *Fatāwā* underlines the privilege that is attached to royal gift-giving when it says that 'the gifts of kings are the kings of gifts'! Mss fol. 167b; text, p. 232; trans., p. 341.

degraded the honour and dignity of kingship by any word or deed, calculated to bring disgrace or lack of respect.[158]

Greatness of the king was dependent not just on the giving of gifts and largesse, but a number of other things as well; and if it was not possible to achieve it through just one act, neither was such grandeur easy to maintain. The *Fatāwā* urges the king to live in such a way 'that his pomp is not reduced and they are also not dishonoured [...] but it is an extremely difficult task.'[159] In practice, then, every action of the king must embody 'greatness' of some kind. The *Fatāwā* is replete with such statements, and the repetitive nature — both of the author and the issue under discussion here — underline its importance as a prescription. For instance, it mentions other details with relation to courtiers, like seating arrangements. These forms of etiquette — 'treat them in accordance with [their] estimated grades [...] in all matters appertaining to the bestowal of robes, gifts, offices and taking counsel, sitting and standing, talking and listening'; and again, 'at court the next day, when everyone occupied his seat according to his status and position in the assembly'[160] — indicated a developed courtly discourse welded together not just through 'power' but also socially cognisable practices involving hierarchy, power and assertion of superiority, all of them representing the 'just' outlook of the ruler.

Other things include wars, which in many examples in the *Fatāwā* may well take the form of religious wars but whose underlying message is one of bravery and majesty of political rule.[161] And here too there are instances that highlight the futility of religious conquest *only* in kingly pursuits. The following quote is all the more interesting because it deals with the period of Mahmud, and highlights the importance given to counsel from the *wazīr*, referred to in the previous section. In another 'conversation' with Qadr Khan, Mahmud blames the wise counsel of his *wazīr* Maimandi for his failure to bring all of Hindustan under the banner of Islam: 'I have had the intention and the means of exterminating infidelity and idolatry with the blows of the sword and of bringing them all to Islam, *hamīn nīyat va kudrat dāshtam ke kufr va shirk rā be-zakhm-i tīgh qal'*

[158] Mss fol. 164b; text, p. 227; trans., p. 333.
[159] Mss fol. 144b; text, p. 198; trans., p. 287.
[160] Mss fols 59a, 221a; text, pp. 87, 302; trans., pp. 120-21, 446.
[161] Mss fol. 9b; text, p. 14; trans p. 19.

kunam, hame rā bā-islām bāz āram. May the family of Ahmad Hasan Maimandi be ruined, for he prevented me from obtaining this honour in the Muslim faith.'[162]

The importance of counsel that was so central to the upholding of the justice of Islam and the act of kingship is turned on its head in the above quote; Maimandi is being projected as someone discouraging Mahmud from extirpating infidelity and idolatry in Hindustan, no doubt for reasons of political tact and need. Hindustan was not central to the political interests of the Ghaznavids; consequently, it is not surprising that the *wazīr* would have advised Mahmud to desist from investing so heavily — for the sake of religion only — in an area whose main role was that of a supplier of booty. The quote highlights the importance that was given to counsel, and more importantly, that even for a purportedly strong, sovereign and religiously-guided ideal ruler like Mahmud, the singular advice of a counsellor was sufficient to stop him from expanding the realms of 'Islam'. Obviously, politics and political interests had greater priority over the glorification of religion, even at the time of Mahmud.[163]

Benevolence, much like compassion in the previous section, is another frequent attribute of majesty; its manipulative element being evident in the following statement: 'The basis of the work of government is benevolence, kindness, mildness, convenience and connivance.'[164]

While the *Fatāwā* may manifestly prescribe these as actions acquiring honour in the next world, their temporal reality served the purposes of royalty far more directly. By tying the two worlds together, Barani manages to bridge the separate realms of kingly activity usefully: 'what a gross negligence it would be on his part if he does not obtain the kingdom of the next world by using the power conferred by Almighty God [...]'.[165] All this is possible when the king has no mean qualities in him: thus, 'kingship is a divine bounty, hence it will not associate with mean qualities. If the two are found

[162] Mss fol. 166b; text, p. 230; trans., p. 338.
[163] It would be interesting to recall here Mahmud's reply to his followers just before the attack on Somnath referred to in chapter 2 earlier, where he did not heed their advice (perhaps because they were slaves and not the *wazīr*).
[164] Mss fol. 188a; text, p. 260; trans., p. 384.
[165] Mss fol. 105a; text, p. 148; trans., p. 212.

mixed together (in any ruler), he is a usurper, and (not) a king.'[166] This is interesting because Barani not only characterises the king, but identifies the usurper as well. This ties up later with his ideas on hereditary rule, something that had been a patchy reality in the Delhi Sultanate.

Finally, all this is possible only if the king has 'Right Resolve' — fortitude in thought and firmness of action. This brings 'great advantages to the affairs of government' because it impresses both his equals and his subordinates. So important is this attribute that Barani compares it with 'divine decrees'; but in doing so he is also implying that all the resolutions of a ruler may not necessarily be in conformity with the divine decrees! A complex passage on the subject ends thus: 'Religious scholars have said: "The phrase Resolve of Kings is a precept of tyrants and not of Caliphs and kings of Islam. A resolve may absolutely be for good, but (if in practice) it leads to an error, to desist from an error is the essence of reason and sheer religiousness."'[167] Such ambiguity resonates with the text's struggle to accommodate the two realities of kingship [in the Delhi Sultanate] — of being a religious and political ruler! The making public of such resolve — whether in war, justice, administration, gift-giving, compassion, benevolence, piety — lay at the heart of the ruler's public establishment and consolidation of power.

Cumulatively, the majesty and awe of all this would engender both obedience and fear amongst the subjects, which would allow for the structures of governance — both discursive and real — to establish themselves firmly in the realm. The king's personal attributes, combined with his other actions and the manner in which he conducted himself at court and outside would stop others from having any contempt for him, and respect for him would increase. This is significant because the reign of Sultan Ghiyath al-Din Balban was marked by such severe ceremonial ostentation, in an attempt to establish his sovereign position over his competitors.[168]

Thus, 'kingship [was] greatness both in form and reality'.[169] Sovereignty, that essential component of rulership, depended upon such visible forms of awe, prestige and

[166] Mss fols 231a-242a; text, pp. 316-32; trans., pp. 469-91, concentrates on 'mean qualities'. For this quote, see fol. 231b; text, p. 317; trans., p. 469.
[167] Mss fols 34a-b; text, p. 52; trans., p. 74.
[168] For a standard narrative, Srivastava, *The Sultanate of Delhi*, pp. 113-24.
[169] Mss fol. 168a; text, p. 233; trans., p. 342.

distinction that were not identifiable with anyone else in the entire governed realm. And 'the more royal grandeur and dignity gain ascendancy over the hearts of the subjects, the more will be the obedience to his orders. And the more effective the obedience of royal orders, the greater (will be) the prosperity of the ruler and the ruled.'[170] The *Fatāwā* leaves the reader in no doubt of the political advantages of such acts that enhance royal grandeur, a far remove from the attributes of humility, submission and devotion that is expected of every believer of Islam. This had been so from the time of Kaimurs, one of the two brothers from whom kingship had originated: 'If he felt this supplication [towards God] at the time of offering his prayers and reciting the Quran, no trace of itself was left in his heart after he had finished (his prayers), and became absorbed in worldly affairs. His heart showed inclination towards the grandeur of kingship [...].'[171]

This pomp, glamour and grandeur would be matched by those of his supporters and helpers. Towards the end of the text Barani gives a long list of qualifications for royal helpers and supporters which the *ḥakīms* had laid down in the reign of Bahram Gur. This slightly repetitive list of 95 attributes includes in it an interesting collage of cultivated forms of behaviour: sweetness of speech, handsome countenance, quick-wittedness, patience without weariness, excellence in manners, dignified, good repute, moderate in speech, stern, compassionate, sedate, able to conceal other people's defects, intelligent, sociable, good conversationalist, with a broad forehead, polite, cultured, meritorious, etc. The cumulative impact of such helpers — presuming that *all* these qualities were not to be found in any one helper — along with those of the king himself must, if found anywhere in the real world, have generated a complex courtly culture with its own set of dynamism and ethics, the recognition and interplay of which would determine both loyalty and service in governance.[172]

Perhaps the most conspicuous tangible component of kingship according to the *Fatāwā* is the army. In an important departure from the usual opening of his advice, Barani says

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[170] Mss fol. 168a; text, p. 233; trans., p. 343.
[171] Mss fols 244a; text, p. 335; trans., p. 495.
[172] Mss fols 213a-b; text, pp. 290-91; trans., pp. 428-29 and *passim*. This is a complex phenomenon deserving separate study, found commonly in early medieval polities. As a useful initial exercise Ali, *Courtly Culture and Political Life*.

O sons of Mahmud, you, *and everyone* whom God elevates to the position of the king [...] ought to know that without a large, powerful, magnificent and stable army it has not been possible for any ruler or king, past or present to maintain his rule [...][173]

It underlines one of the most important political realities of the time, the need for a powerful army in order to establish and consolidate rulership in a competitive and hostile political environment. It is important that from amongst the dozen or so advantages that Barani lists for possessing an army, only 3 of them directly refer to the upholding of Islam. The others are all concerned with the practical realities of political rulership: assistance in administration, crushing rebellions, conquest, acquisition of wealth and general help to the sovereign in discharging his role as a ruler. In brief, it is the role of the army to 'establish (the prestige) of [the king's] conquests in the hearts of the people and bring the (world) under his rule and government.'[174] This allots to the army not just a military role, but one that is far more broad and socially situated.

It is important to underline the fact that this is not done with a social objective; on the contrary, there is no doubt in Barani's mind that the role he allocates to the army is expressly political, something that has always been so. Through the mouth of Kaikhusrau ['ruler of the entire inhabited world'], Barani says that 'kingship is army, and army is kingship [...] kingship is maintained by two pillars — the first pillar is monarchy and the second pillar is conquest. Both pillars are maintained by the army. For if there is no army, or if the army is small and distressed and disorderly, neither monarchy nor conquests will be possible.'[175] This is significant not only because of the importance that Barani gives to the army in *every* aspect of rulership, but that it marks a radical departure from the *Fatāwā*'s earlier position that success in kingship/rulership is something that is divinely monitored and contingent upon acts of faith. Here, Barani locates the potency of rulership in something far more temporal and earthly: brute force and acquisition. Amongst other things, this was also in keeping with the political realities of early Islam, both under the Prophet and the early political dynasties of Islam,

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173 Mss fol. 64a; text, p. 95; trans., p. 132.
174 Mss fol. 64b; text, p. 95; trans., p. 132; also fol. 93b; text, p. 134; trans., p. 189, where he says that possessing a strong army would discourage others from attacking it, 'and will be replaced with awe and fear'.
175 Mss fol. 65a; text, p. 96; trans., p. 133.

where the army played a very important role in the acquisition of territories albeit under the military banner of 'Islam'.

Further, if the primary motif of the *Fatāwā* is justice — an objective that has come from pre-Islamic times, through the period of classical Islam to the time of Barani — and its performative arena is kingship, then it seems that the army was essential to the realisation of that too. When the historians of Ajam asked Jamshed what the basis of kingship was,

Jamshed replied: A large number of well-organised soldiers and plenitude of justice and benevolence. [...] The questioners asked Jamshed (again): 'What is your reason for giving precedence to a large army over justice and benevolence?' Jamshed replied: 'If the world is not kept in subjection by the army, if the disobedience and (revolts) of the refractory and the traitors are not turned into obedience and submission, and if through the power and the grandeur of the army law and order are not maintained in the world, neither the enforcement of justice nor of benevolence will be possible.[176]

Barani dwells in great detail on the appointment of the army, its officers and commanders, on controlling it properly and 'subtly', the disadvantages of 'an army of slaves' [reminiscent of the realities of the Delhi Sultanate], etc.[177] Seen together, it would seem that the army was the ordering principle of kingship, the political tool to enable effective governance, the bulwark of other kingly discursive practices. Through the 'historians of Ajam' in conversation with Jamshed, Barani summarises what he considers to be the essential reasons for maintaining an army.

This serves many purposes in the text, and is a brilliant example of Barani's literary and political acumen. The conversationalists are people with knowledge [historians], and a celebrated king [Jamshed], and so the power dynamics are properly ordered; the fact that it is a 'pre-Islamic' conversation serves the purpose both of the un-Islamicness of kingship as an institution, borrowed as it was from pre-Islamic times, and also that with the passage of time the assertion of pre-Islamic norms as necessities in kingship had become a way to acquire extra-legal political space within Islam; and the conversation,

[176] Mss fol. 65a; text, p. 96; trans., p. 134.

almost surely fictional, summarises Barani's own views which were no doubt conditioned by the realities of the Delhi Sultanate, yet at the same time divesting him of any responsibility.

Thus, Barani leaves us in no doubt about the fact that the army played an essential role in the execution of justice and benevolence of the king. Conversely, the default idea that may be deduced is that the presence of innate justice in the ruler is not enough for it to manifest itself; in fact, it requires an army to uphold it and thus present the king as a just ruler. The army, therefore, played a significant role in the upkeep of the magnificence and faith of the ruler. An important element in this was the acquisition of territory, and the keeping of occupied territories under [political] control. More importantly, the army played an important role in the acquisition of wealth, both material and human, through the many wars that were fought, and which had a direct bearing on the 'glory' of the king.[178]

Also, in a very interesting way, this elevated political status that Barani accords to the army has an important social impact. An important concern of the *Fatāwā* is the contentment of the army, and the problems that a king may face if his army is unhappy with him. This allows him to introduce the idea of price control and regulation, a royal act identified singularly with the reign of Sultan Ala al-Din Khalaji . The interesting thing about price regulation was that although it was done with the express intention of benefitting the army — maintained as they were on relatively low salaries, with a fairly high upkeep cost — its benefits were obviously not limited to the army alone. Common people also benefitted from price control, and Barani dwells on it in great detail. 'O sons of Mahmud, know that in the cheapness of the requisites of the army and the commodities of the general livelihood, there are a number of religious and worldly advantages conducive to the well-being of both the ruler and the ruled.'[179]

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[177] Mss fols 71b*ff*; text, pp. 104*ff*; trans., pp. 146*ff*. Note Barani's comment that Mahmud's 'greatest difficulty' was the organisation of his slaves into an army.
[178] Mss fols 64b-65a; text, pp. 95-96; trans., pp. 132-33. It is important to point out that in mss fols 182a-b; text, pp. 251-52; trans., pp. 371-72, he says that 'Far-sighted and sagacious men have said: "If avoidance by other means is possible, a great battle ought not to be undertaken." And later, that in a great battle 'the whole kingdom is turned upside down'.
[179] Mss fol. 92b; text, pp. 133; trans., p. 188.

The advantages of price control that Barani lists, coupled with his detailed knowledge of the system at work under Ala al-Din as we know from his *Tārīkh*, points towards other important issues: the difficult-to-decipher but available economic information in the *Fatāwā*;[180] the need and importance of maintaining an army so large that the economy would need to be adjusted to its needs; and the undeniable superior position that military strength brought with it for any ruler who could muster a large, disciplined and 'contented' army. The army was so large that the soldiers were often mustered from various *kāfir* groups.[181] This is in turn very important[182] because such a 'secularly' composed army was then expected, at least textually, to fight battles for the glorification of Islam! The fact that Barani would seek the contentment of an army of such composition through price control points towards their utmost importance as a group.

Of course there are the typical 'class' elements in his advice: '[...] without the army the king and his subjects would be equal', but such a statement becomes clear when one reads further that 'the preservation of the king is due to the army'.[183] Clearly then, Barani is locating military power as central to the office of kingship and to the realisation of its ideals. Barani addresses this issue in a typically circular manner, locating the strength of the ruler in the army, and that of the army on transcendental powers: 'a king ought not to hope for victory and success merely on the ground, "I am on the side of righteousness and the enemy is on the side of evil", for the wicked have often been victorious over the virtuous. The victory and defeat of army in battles are among the preordained commands of divine destiny, the mystery of which it is not possible for human knowledge or wisdom to comprehend.'[184] Thus Barani addresses the political realities of the time where being an upholder of the Faith was obviously not

[180] The *Fatāwā* has traditionally been seen as a political text, but see Najaf Haider, 'Money and Accumulation in Medieval Islam: A Study of the Views of Ziyauddin Barani and Shaikh Nizamuddin', Paper presented at 'Rethinking a Millennium: India from the Eighth to the Eleventh Centuries', Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, 2-4 February 2004 (unpublished).
[181] An important problem with armies in the subcontinent was its (militarily) 'indisciplined' nature, i.e., that it was difficult to muster a large army accustomed to a universal drill and command. This was largely because of the huge military labour market that the subcontinent afforded, a discussion of which remains outside our immediate interests. As an example from the *Fatāwā* see mss fol. 71a; text, p. 104; trans., p. 146, where it is mentioned that of the 30,000 slave horsemen of Mahmud, '15,000 are (Hindu slaves) and 15,000 are from the countries of China and Khitā.'

[183] Mss fols 67b, 70b; text, pp. 99,103; trans., pp. 139, 145, where he says that 'the enrolment of the ignoble among the gallant warriors throws the work of the army in disorder', and how military officers should be 'well-born, brave and virtuous'.
[184] Mss fol. 183a; text, pp. 252-53; trans., p. 372.

enough to win battles; rather, what was far more assured was the strength gained from the command of a stable and big army.

The army was in many ways the political arm of the king; and although in reality it was eclectically mustered and multiply commanded, the *Fatāwā* insists on commanding the king to take a personal interest not only in the recruitment of soldiers but also the 'salary which in years of plenty and of scarcity is needed to provide equipment for the soldiers [... and] an inquiry about the horses and the arms' is also deemed 'necessary'.[185] The direct relation that Barani outlines between the king and the army points in a number of directions. First, the centrality of the army no doubt points to its need in the contemporary political scenario. Second, it draws attention to the nature of the economy at the time. Undoubtedly, the main source of income for the central treasury was revenue from the agricultural sector; but the not infrequent droughts and famines meant that income from land revenue was often uneven. This in turn would affect prices of goods in the markets, upon which the non-producing classes like the army were dependent. The salaries of the soldiers could not be raised due to two reasons: given the huge size of the army, it would not be financially viable to retain them on a very high salary. Also, salary needed to be kept constant to run the economy properly, and to avoid monetary fluctuations. In a year of drought when revenue income was low, the only way in which this problem could be solved was either by debasing the coinage, or by controlling the prices of essential goods.

It is important that both these 'experiments' had been attempted in the Delhi Sultanate. Ala al-Din Khalaji had brought forth the idea of price regulation which, though it worked very well in his lifetime, collapsed almost on the day of his death. Similarly, Muhammad bin Tughluq had debased the gold coin to copper in order to meet the monetary imbalance caused by the sudden and huge increase in military numbers in the face of an impending Mongol invasion. It also needs to be mentioned that the higher the number of the army, the concurrent would be the fall in the number of farmers since rural areas were the most important military labour market in the subcontinent. In light of all this, it is interesting that Barani dwells in great detail over price regulations — an experiment he would be able to recall dimly from his childhood — and its advantages

[185] Mss fol. 70b; text, p. 103; trans., p. 144.

both for the army and the civil populace, rather than currency reform, which would have been an experiment he would have witnessed himself.[186]

But to return to the economic reforms for the moment, it seems possible to proceed on the assumption made by Peter Jackson that the massive size of the army was the main reason for the two said economic experiments in the Delhi Sultanate.[187] Barani's preference for price regulations — it being one of the longest advice in the *Fatāwā*[188] — may be an indicator of his belief in the higher degree of success under a sovereign, authoritarian ruler, rather than currency reform which he had himself witnessed to be a great failure in the time of Muhammad bin Tughluq. Barani was very young during the reign of Ala al-Din Khalaji, and it is possible that his preference for price regulation comes more from the reputation of its success that he must have heard later in his life.[189]

The impression is significant in that he says that the army 'does not remain loyal without the low prices of its requirements'.[190] This puts a question-mark behind all the other attributes of loyalty that Barani has outlined earlier, especially those relating to religious righteousness, etc. The central position that he allots to the army, and the direct correlation between their loyalty and their financial comfort is an astute indicator of the realism in the *Fatāwā* with regards to the travails of kingship *vis-à-vis* its army. In a situation where the ruler oversaw a massive army, and one as diversely comprised as of the Delhi sultans, loyalty could obviously not be ensured through religious piety and conviction. The bonds were far more mercenary, and financial arrangements were an important element in it.[191]

The pursuit of price control suddenly emerges — about half-way in the text — as the bulwark of 'proper governance', its goal remaining the complicated category of 'justice'. Barani ties this directly with all other aspects of governmental rule, completely

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[186] This provides us with an entry into another very important, and totally neglected element in the *Fatawa*, the mapping of 'common people' in a text meant ostensibly for rulership. It is discussed in some detail in chapter 6.
[187] Jackson, 'Delhi: The Problem of a Vast Military Encampment' in R.E. Frykenberg, ed., *Delhi through the Ages: Essays in Urban History, Culture and Society*, Delhi, 1986, pp. 18-33.
[188] Mss fols 90b-104a; text, pp. 131-46; trans., pp. 184-209.
[189] Interestingly, the anecdote accompanying this *naṣīhat* does not speak of Ala-al-Din Khalaji, rather about an incident in the *Tārīkh-i Ma'āsir-i Sahābāh* regarding the caliph Umar which Mahmud had read. The veracity of such an event is typically ambiguous.
[190] Mss fol. 90b; text, p. 131; trans., p. 184.

obfuscating the primacy of religion that had dominated the imagination of the reader till then. 'Kings should regard the cheapening of prices of the means of general livelihood to be the cornerstone of the administration of their kingdom and the dispensation of justice.'[192] Its social impact is typically double-edged: on the one hand, low prices — which are 'related to abundance'[193] — consolidate the loyalty of the army and the subjects in general ['They should consider the stability of their kingdom to be dependent upon the stability of both army and the people, and this in turn to be (resting) on the low prices of the means of livelihood'];[194] on the other, 'in these later times and generations' when everyone is indulging in 'profit-making', it is useful to control prices because everyone will be happy with their own vocations and the lives they lead, and so the social order would remain undisturbed. People would not want to change professions as they do during times of uncontrolled inflation — 'soldiers take to agriculture, cultivators [...] take to trade [...] shopkeepers try to become officers, men of noble birth become caravan merchants, caravan merchants seek for governorships and commanderships of the army'[195] — and thus it would be easy to govern a society where social places would remain both unchallenged and confirmed.

Thus, price control implied 'the highest stage of justice', adding to the glamour and grandeur of kingship, something that kings should strive for 'violently', for although cheap prices 'descend from God, [they] are dependent on the equity, justice, control and efforts of Caliphs and Sultans'.[196] The obvious class element apart, this indicates the reality of social mobility that had become inherent to expanding political Islam and obviously caused the disruption of privileges for old, aristocratic families. The way Barani deals with it shows his typical political acumen, and embodies the tensions caused by social mobility in the polity. In the case of the Delhi Sultanate, it was made more acute by the presence of *kāfir*s, whom Barani continuously accuses of regrating (and hoarding).[197]

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[191] *Ibid.,* where he also says that 'the army does not become loyal and remain loyal without wealth'.
[192] Mss fol. 92a; text, p. 132; trans., p. 186.
[193] Mss fol. 96a; text, p. 137; trans., p. 194.
[194] Mss fol. 91a; text, p. 131; trans., p. 185.
[195] Mss 96a; text, p. 137; trans., p. 194, and also fol. 95b; text, p. 136; trans., p. 193, where he mentions that stability of government is achieved when 'everyone devotes himself to his own art and industry'.
[196] Mss fols 101a, 91b, 102b; text, pp. 143, 132, 145; trans., pp. 204, 186, 207.
[197] See for instance mss fol. 95a; text, p. 136; trans., p. 192.

Finally, the significance of price control measures in the text is better appreciated when we see that it precedes Barani's opinion on the introduction of *zawābit* [state laws];[198] they prepare the reader once again for the need to remember that the execution of Islamic kingship — by definition an unIslamic institution — requires the performance of certain practices that are not manifestly or innately Islamic, yet are essential to the creation of a social order accustomed to governance. The conundrum that arises from this lies at the centre of understanding the nature of this complicated text: is it enough to be a ruler appointed by God in Islam and presume that obedience and governance will follow easily out of that position of appointed power, or is rulership a far more prosaic and temporal office where the ruler has to consolidate political rule through multiple languages of control and obedience to enable political will? The connections he makes between price regulation, justice and divine wisdom would leave any reader in complete confusion if the attempt was to pin-point any centrality: 'There can be no higher benefit in the cheapening of prices than this — that the objects of divine wisdom become manifest among the nobles and the commons.'[199]

But perhaps the most important contribution that the text as a whole makes is through *zawābit*, rules of the state, different from the laws of Islam, which are deemed necessary for governance. It is the first, and the only such example in the textual history of the Delhi Sultanate where a new politico-administrative category is introduced to execute the art of governance.

It is all too easy to identify religious strains in everything that Barani suggests in the *Fatāwā*; the text is replete with such markers. But as with the complicated category of justice, so with *zawābit*, it becomes difficult to decide whether the use of religion is a garb or a guard for the implicit meanings of the text. It would seem to be an outer, cognisable, visible layer which covers ideas that are far less conformist. In this instance, Barani starts with saying that firmness of conviction in rules of administration is essential for proper rulership. Rules should, of course, be in conformity with the righteousness of Islam.

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[198] Steingass, *Dictionary*, s.v. 'zābitā' [pl. 'zawābit'], p. 798.
[199] Mss fol. 95a; text, p. 136; trans., p. 192.

But if due to change of times and disagreeableness of circumstances, he is unable to follow the rules of the ancients, he ought to, with the guidance of the views of those who are of perfect wisdom, and who have been well-acquainted with political trade and have been distinguished by their education for their leadership, frame rules suited to his times and circumstances, reign and age and proceed to enforce them.[200]

And further, that

if there is anything in these regulations against the *sunnah* and you find their enforcement nevertheless to be necessary owing to the lack of great virtue and the abundance of the people having infirm religious faith, then it ought to be clear to you that resorting to them comes under the category: 'Necessity makes things lawful, which are forbidden.'[201]

For practical purposes, then, this is what Barani is saying: while it is important that the ruler be the upholder of the Faith and do everything that is needed to establish Islam, changing times and 'disagreeableness of circumstances' — a new caveat to enable exceptions, and particularly relevant to the context of the Delhi Sultanate — are enough reason to frame new, anti-*sharī'a* regulations for the sake of politics. There are implicit checks as well; Barani is clear not to vest all powers for new regulations with the ruler, rather he is insistent that it be done 'with the guidance of those who are of perfect wisdom' [i.e., the *'ulamā* and the learned at court, such as the counsellors]. This may not necessarily be a falling back on the orthodoxy; rather, one is tempted to say that by invoking the people of 'perfect wisdom' Barani is actually suggesting that they are the people who will know how to adapt 'wisdom' to the new political needs, and formulate new rules accordingly. Thus, rules are subjective to their context, and their ultimate aim should be the preservation of political rulership, in much the same way that holy laws are changeable as well. 'It has been considered, that (even) in the sphere of the

[200] Mss fol. 158a; text, p. 218; trans., p. 319.
[201] Mss fol. 159a; text, pp. 219-20; trans., pp. 321-22. The killing of Muslims by Muslim rulers was also known, although Barani identifies it with the general anti-Islamic nature of the institution of kingship itself: mss fol. 225a; text, p. 308; trans., p. 455: 'You should not be deceived by the worshippers of this world, who against the word of God and the Prophet issue a *fatwā*, that it is permitted to the king to imprison and kill Mussulmans on grounds of "political expediency".'

sharīʿa [...] orders are cancelled. The original orders are abrogated, then reinstituted, and (the people) are asked to obey new orders. The welfare of the religion and the kingdom is revealed through cancellation.'[202]

O sons of Mahmud, you are to know this, that the sum and head of government is this. The orders and prohibitions of the king are enforced on the subjects [...] and the people are put under order and good government. [...] About such a king of the universe and his government, it has been said: *yā rab che khush ast pādshāhī kardan, dar sūrat-i bandagī khuday kardan* O God, how sweet it is to be a king! To act as master in the guise of a servant.[203]

A new truth emerges from this quote: that the role of a 'servant, *bandā*' [ruler] is in fact a 'guise, *sūrat*' for acting as 'God, *khudā*'. The proposition that religious righteousness is the ballast of Islamic rulership in every governed realm is thus made subjective to the necessity of having rules that will ensure political life over religious drive; the discursive practice of a king must be the preservation of his rule through any measure, rather than the glorification of Islam. 'How can the affairs of government be managed and be firm without rules, which in the terminology of administration means following (a line of) action, which the (king) has imposed on himself as necessary and indispensable for the attainment of the ends of government, and from which he does not deviate in any event?'[204] Such a line of action is a *zabitā*! And this is what the king must always adhere to, for 'changeableness is the very negation of firmness'; he is not a king whose 'words are not like inscriptions on stones and his steps as firm as a mountain.'[205]

This may be a useful place to briefly point out the complicated nature of the *Fatāwā* as a text, and the problems of analysing it layer by layer. The *zabitā* is not the only context in which the *Fatāwā* mentions the overlooking of religion by the ruler. There are instances where precisely the same action has been disapproved by the text, as when 'Right Resolve' is being discussed by the author, where such liberties are tied to tyranny

202 Mss fols 35b-36a; text, pp. 53-54; trans., pp. 77-78.
203 Mss fol. 160a; text, p. 221; trans., p. 323.
204 Mss fol. 157b; text, p. 217; trans., p. 318. Note that the word *zabitā* is mentioned slightly later [mss fol. 158a; text, p. 218; trans., p. 318], and strictly speaking the quote should not be seen as a 'definition' of the term. However, the context for both is the same and the relation between the two obvious; they are also part of the same *naṣīḥat*.

and despotism.[206] Importantly, it also hints at the reality of kings actually taking such liberties, a practice prevalent in pre-Islamic times as well. At one place Alexander is quoted as saying that the ancient Pharaohs 'laid claims to divinity as they did not care for the promotion of religion'.[207]

To put it another way, the formulation of *zabitā* may also be seen as the advisory articulation of prevalent and common practices which have, in other places in the text, been cited as warnings! The overall analysis of the *Fatāwā* should therefore be conducted through the identification of directed meanings even where citations contradict one another.

Despite the religious sheen of the text, such dramatic exceptions demonstrate the practical, contested nature of the political realities in which the *Fatāwā* situated itself. Far from the orthodox picture that has been painted of Barani, his political views in this text suggest that at its best kingship was based on a sensible accounting and tally of exigent realities; while firmness of character was a desirable attribute of a ruler, that firmness did not imply either conservatism or conformity. Depending on the needs of the context, novelty in political ideas was a welcome trait, as long as it was able to uphold political supremacy. It was important to keep the 'door of intercession' open, which allowed for hope to grow in the hearts of the subject population.[208] This subject population — in the *Fatāwā* at least — most definitely included a large non-Muslim population in it. The political community which is resident in the imagination of the *Fatāwā* included within it not only 'zimmis' and '*kāfir*s' but also the ambiguous category of 'non-Muslims, *nā musalmān*',[209] which in the context of the Delhi Sultanate would be deemed more an inclusive rather than an exclusive category. Despite the vitriolic outburst against Hindus, it is undeniable that they were seen as part of the political citizenry of the *Fatāwā*. It would therefore be natural that their inclusion be advised for any 'sons of Mahmud'. Treating them as '*zimmi*s' was a useful device in a seemingly conservative text, since that would allow Barani to direct his attacks on

[205] Mss fols 235a-b; text, pp. 322-23; trans., pp. 476-77.
[206] Mss fol. 34a; text, p. 51; trans., p. 74.
[207] Mss fol. 35a; text, p. 53; trans., p. 75.
[208] Mss fols 153a-b; text, pp. 210-11; trans., pp. 308-9.
[209] The term appears in a number of places in the text but for its inclusion as a variable in the political community of the *Fatāwā* see mss fol. 43b; text, p. 66; trans., p. 94.

'Hindus' on specific occasions yet include them in a general welfare he suggests for the entire populace. Such a reference comes early in the text, when Barani admonishes the ruler to uphold the orders of Islam, one of its results being that the honour and the lives of 'the Mussulmans and of the mass of the *zimmis* are protected and secure, *ahl-i islām va jamāhir-i ahl-i zimme dar hafz va imān mibāshand*'.[210] And, in fact, political expediency so drives the purpose of the *Fatāwā* that [as mentioned earlier] Barani mentions a *fatwā* by 'the worshippers of this world' condoning the killing of Muslims on grounds of 'political expediency'.[211]

Zawābit, nā musalmān and other such politically expedient provisos are not the only indicators of the mutation of the supremacy of Islam in the *Fatāwā*. The remission of kings from the strict performance of religious duties [despite being the upholders of the Faith] are plenty, and fundamental, in the text. As long as the king's faith in Islam is not doubtable, it does not matter if the king did not show 'excess in his devotions, religious observances, fasts, superarogatory prayers', etc. As mentioned earlier, the sins of his lower self [including sensual pleasures] were erased 'on the grounds that he protects and propagates the faith'.[212] Similarly, while warning the king against becoming too haughty [especially against God and the Prophet] Barani says that the king 'being guilty of error, negligence or sin is a different matter'.[213] Therefore, it seems that the king's Islamic prescriptions — those that Barani had so keenly emphasised earlier in an attempt to alleviate the unIslamicness of the institution of kingship itself — were also subjective to a number of concessions and compromises as long as the king's known religious affiliation and general convictions were not in doubt.

This position allows Barani to introduce and explain a number of other 'realities' in the polity: the practice of 'sin', for instance.[214] While talking about how the king is answerable to God for the actions of all his subjects, Barani tangentially makes another very important point; namely, that the Quranic prohibition against investigating into sins applies to a polity because 'individuals are neither under obligation nor are they

210 Mss fol. 7a; text, p. 11; trans., p. 13.
211 Mss fol. 225a; text, p. 322; trans., p. 455. While Barani does not condone the killing of Muslims, his mention of this reflects the reality of its practice in its time.
212 Mss fol. 6b; text, p. 10; trans., pp. 12-13.
213 Mss fol. 142b; text, p. 195; trans., p. 283.
214 This will be dealt in more detail in chapter 6.

responsible to each other, nor answerable, nor entitled to command nor bound to obedience'. Yet, 'the mass of the people, under the sovereignty of the king, constitute the order of one household.'[215] This, and other similar comments, draw attention to Barani's political maturity whilst talking about the governance of a realm: the importance of identifying individuals both at the singular and communal level ['this (...) applies to the dealings of individuals in relation to each other'];[216] the almost natural inclination of people to be disobedient and the simultaneous need of the king to order society into one 'household', climaxed by his inevitable answerability to God; and Barani's sensibility in being able to bring it all together under the banner of sovereignty.

This is not an isolated example; such comments are scattered in the text and may help us to understand better other details as well: royal punishment, an important instrument of obedience and control, is equally significant. Barani emphasises that severity of punishment without due reflection is unworthy of a good ruler. 'There is a difference between mere intention and actions',[217] and the king must bear that in mind while punishing others. Importantly, the king must always take personal interest ['whenever the case of the subject of his realm comes before him [... it] should be decided in accordance with his orders in his presence'][218] in the punishments that are being meted out in his name, by his officers, because the grandeur of kingship, the awe and power so essential for the structures of governance to stand firm, would be greatly affected [leading to 'bad reputation and distrust'][219] if unjust punishments came to be identified with kingly rule ['For it is because of the fear of royal pardon and punishments that the elements of hope and fear among the subjects, which are the pillars of good order and administration, are inscribed, and remain inscribed on the hearts of the nobles and the commons of the country'].[220] The political spaces that emerge from 'Royal Pardon and Punishments' are equally remarkable. By suggesting that the king should not only be lenient but if necessary overlook faults of his supporters ['the king veils and overlooks their faults and does not disgrace them for every triviality'],[221] Barani underlines the importance of recognising political loyalty and service above law. In fact, he even

[215] Mss fols 79a-b; text, p. 116; trans., p. 162.
[216] *Ibid.*
[217] Mss fol. 80a; text, p. 116; trans., p. 165.
[218] Mss fol. 134b*f*; text, p. 183; trans., p. 266*f*.
[219] Mss fol. 144b; text, p. 198; trans., p. 287.
[220] Mss fol. 141a; text, p. 193; trans., p. 280.
[221] Mss fol. 142b; text, p. 195; trans., p. 284.

quotes the 'great men of religion and the realm of Mustafa': 'Every king who understands well the meaning of the *Qur'ānic* verse "God is the forgiver of sins, the acceptor of repentance and severe in His punishments", will also know the occasions for forgiveness and (punishment) and system and good order will appear during his reign'.[222] If the king were to punish each and every person, there wouldn't be even 'a reptile [left] on the back of the earth'. All sons of Adam commit wrongs, according to the Prophet in the *Fatāwā*, and 'God forgives and pardons and does not catch hold'.[223]

Elsewhere, Barani also draws attention to the inadequacy of religion to enable proper governance, with regards to punishments. He says that there are not only no clear directives regarding punishment in politics, but in fact 'religious scholars have entrusted [it] to the care of kings and the limits of [it] have not been fixed.'[224] The responsibility is therefore clearly that of the ruler, and given the fact that maintenance of political rule is his goal, he should obviously bear variables in mind and not blindly follow a religion that is, admittedly by the text, insufficient on this matter.

Political liberties may be deciphered in the *Fatāwā* not just through the positive statements of Barani, but also by a default reading of it. While speaking in favour of the preservation of ranks and grades amongst the nobility and recognising those who have rendered great services to the court, Barani also talks about kings who consider nothing but loyalty and sincerity towards themselves as the only criterion for making appointments.[225] And while Barani does not approve of such 'camel and cat incongruity',[226] his disapproval only confirms the practice. It alerts us to the need for service and loyalty that had come to occupy such a central position in the Delhi Sultanate, as has been discussed in chapter 2; it also informs us of the prevalence of it at court, in contravention of the prescriptions regarding the 'high born/low born' in the text. Obviously, for the rulers, loyalty, devotion, service and sincerity counted much more than considerations of birth. If at all, the history of the Delhi Sultanate would have shown that men of equal and high birth were far more difficult to control and order, a

222 Mss fols 142b-143a; text, pp. 195-96; trans., pp. 284-85.
223 Mss fol. 145a; text, p. 199; trans., pp. 289-90.
224 Mss fol. 146a, 150b; text, pp. 200, 207; trans., pp. 292-93, 303.
225 Mss fols 162b, 56a; text, pp. 224, 83; trans., pp. 329, 114.
226 This seems to be a common referent in the *Fatāwā*; cf. mss fols 23b, 55b, 59a, 163b; text, pp. 36, 83, 87, 226; trans., pp. 50, 113, 121, 331. This example is from the last citation.

reality which may have prompted Barani to suggest that a king could not rule unless the helpers and supporters of the earlier ruler had not been removed.[227]

In this way Barani creates textual spaces where the exigencies of politics are inserted in seemingly religious brackets to allow for the practice of practical, pragmatic measures to enable the working of governance and politics in a way that would have been almost impossible for the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate to live without. By allowing for various concessions, sometimes on the basis of *Qur'ānic*/Prophetic quotations, Barani prescribes not severity but latitude and exception in acts of governance, leading to a well-governed polity. The significance of religious righteousness seems to recede to the background if one considers the many freedoms that Barani accords to kingly rule. A final illustration of this appears where Barani lists the objectives of a king. Of the approximately 30 objectives, only 11 are overtly religious prescriptions. The list begins with 'putting the affairs of the religion on a firm basis', but thereafter goes on to include a number of very pragmatic issues like submission and obedience of the populace, the quelling of rebellions, the end of oppression, keeping the fearless and the reckless in order, etc.[228]

Other kingly attributes referred to earlier — firmness in thought and action, proper resolve, the importance of counsel and consensus, the significance of adhering to 'knowledge and reason' [with the significant differentiation between the two in matters of kingship] — coupled with the various concessions that the text allows for 'political expediency' leading to an ultimate, sovereign position for the ruler marked by awe, glamour and power together enable us to consider a less conservative tone for the text. On the contrary, if at all, this chapter has tried to show how Barani, in the *Fatāwā*, struggled on a see-saw to textually [and theologically, perhaps because of his education] explain the vexed realities of kingship in political Islam, made more complex by its setting in the Indian subcontinent.

[227] Mss fol. 223b; text, pp. 305-6; trans., pp. 451-52. I have refrained from repeating the arguments that Barani makes in favour of the high born and against the low born [discussed at many places in this chapter], but in sum he says that 'birds of the same feather flock together', cf. mss fol. 233a; text, p. 320; trans., p. 473.

[228] Mss fols 17b-18a; text, pp. 26-27; trans., pp. 36-38. Other listings of kingly attributes/kingship appear on mss fols 22a-b, 64b, 99a-b; text, pp. 33-34, 95, 140-41; trans., pp. 47-48, 132, 201, where [again] a very minor percentage are overtly religious prescriptions, the majority referring to more temporal, immediate and political concerns.

Textually speaking, then, 'governance' was an act that was singularly linked to kingship, the latter being a divine act visible on earth, and thus committed to the upholding of the Faith. But in the actual execution of it, rulership was a creative exercise combining religious conviction with political acumen and need determined and dictated by the context. Politics was a game of requirements, its goal being the ordering of the 'world'. The fact that it is one of the duties if the royal officers to 'bring to royal notice the matters in which *sharīʿā* cannot be enforced' summarises truly the contested realities of Islamic political rule in the Indian subcontinent.[229]

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[229] Mss fol. 145b; text, p. 200; trans., p. 291.

5

FATĀWĀ-I-JAHĀNDĀRĪ: TEXT AND AUDIENCE

Given that Barani had spent his whole life in the realms of the Delhi Sultanate, and for the largest part was based in the capital city, it is remarkable that he does not mention the city or the sultanate by name even once in the entirety of the *Fatāwā*; this is both intriguing and interesting. There is also no indication in the text that Barani had tried to present his work to the reigning sultan. How, then, did Barani weave his narrative around historical figures, with no reference to his surrounding realities? When one looks carefully at the text, it seems to be composed at various historical levels: there are references to pre-Islamic rulers and polities, to the early Islamic, Medinean polity and the period of the 4 rightly-guided caliphs, to the Umayyads and Abbassids. But the most conspicuous reference, and one that appears constantly through the course of the entire text, is to Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni. He appears in various modes in the text: as a father addressing his sons [the future rulers of the Delhi Sultanate(?)], as an ideal [Islamic] ruler, as a perfect administrator, as an example so worth emulating that enemies would seek to convert to Islam in admiration of his convictions, as a just ruler and an upholder of the Faith, etc. All this is incorporated in the advice that Barani expounds in the *Fatāwā*, in his admonitions and pleas to the rulers of Islam whom he addresses.

The peculiarity of this form of a narrative, with a total absence of any reference to place or person to allow us to locate it contextually, couples with the particularity of scattered but recurrent details in the text that urge us to consider it in the context of the Delhi Sultanate wherein the meanings of the advice may become more sensible and clear [as mentioned in the Introduction]. This means that the text, by its very form, acquires a general and universal, as well as particular, tone. Chapter 4 attempted to understand the obvious and implied meanings of the advice in the text, and how they may be understood better bearing in mind the realities of the Delhi Sultanate. The performance of kingship was the main focus, and attention was paid to the possibilities afforded within the text for political latitude in contradiction of or by stretching the limits of apparently religious injunctions. This chapter is intended to complement that

understanding of the *Fatāwā* from the previous chapter. In an attempt to address other strains, it revisits the text from another perspective: by focussing on one prominent presence [Mahmud of Ghazni] and an equally rankling absence [the (im)possibility of women rulers, surrounding Raziyya], this chapter tries to understand how the text has been constructed, intentionally *and* unintentionally, by the author. This would be a rewarding exercise bearing in mind that there exists no work that attempts a similar textual analysis for the *Fatāwā*, and it may direct us to newer ways of understanding the meanings of the text. Most of this will be pursued by highlighting and commenting on literary devices employed by Barani in the text, and what implications they may have in understanding the intention or meaning of the advice, individually and as an entirety.

Broadly, this chapter is divided in two parts. Starting with Mahmud of Ghazni, it treats some attendant themes: the use of Mahmud's paternal voice in the text, and the image and imagination of him as a hero in the *Fatāwā*, entwined wherein are notions of textual time, morality, and exception. The brief second part dwells on Raziyya and the information available about her, none of which is from the *Fatāwā* itself, but which serves the purpose of identifying a default meaning in the text through an elaboration of an absence. By situating the importance of Raziyya and her reign within the semantic confines of the *Fatāwā*, it amplifies and problematises the complete silence of the text on the question of the possibility of a woman ruler. Together, the chapter attempts not only to locate the text in a broader textual space, but by engaging with it from different points of entry hopes for a more nuanced understanding of the text as a whole.

The Voice of Mahmud

Of the 24 advice that comprise the *Fatāwā*, 19 open with the following line, or a variation of it.

'O sons of Mahmud and kings of Islam ... *ay farzandān-i maḥmūd va pādshahān-i islām* ....'

Mahmud's admonitory voice peppers the entire manuscript so often that it would be impossible to give an exhaustive account of it. Undoubtedly, Mahmud's is the name that occurs most often in the *Fatāwā*. It is therefore worth pondering over why Barani

decided to use his voice — what I call a 'literary device', to draw attention to its intended impact — to address the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate. Mahmud's voice was, no doubt, meant to underline messages, those that were explicitly articulated and those that were veiled and liminally present.[1] Therefore, engaging with the use of Mahmud as a 'voice' in the text may reveal deeper meanings and priorities that Barani had tactfully evaded taking responsibility of himself, as the author of the text. To understand better the use of Mahmud's voice, it would be useful to elaborate on the multiple structures of intercalated meanings that are engendered through the use of Mahmud as a 'hero' in the text.[2]

First, and Afsar Khan draws attention to this as well, is the fact of Mahmud being the 'eponymous hero' of the *Fatāwā*.[3] Khan's conclusions are straightforward in allocating the reason: according to her, 'Sultan Mahmud in the orthodox medieval Muslim circles was viewed as the popular hero of *jihād* and *ghaza* [*sic*!] and due to such achievements he alone could extend credence to Barani's picture of a religiously orthodox and administratively efficient king. The justification of his political doctrines could best be established through the figure of Mahmud.'[4] Khan's comment obviously upholds her larger conclusions about the conservative tone of the author, which [in the previous chapter] has been juxtaposed with other political latitude. She elaborates further by saying that it would seem from reading the *Fatāwā* that Barani almost visualised Sultan Mahmud as sitting on the throne of Delhi.[5] This seems more difficult to accept than her former suggestion because [and as this section will argue later] Mahmud's appearance in the text occurs in multiple time categories, leaving the conscientious reader somewhat baffled about the exact nature of his textual lifetime.

Khan's first suggestion — that Mahmud was an ideal carrier for Barani's conservative views — is more easily tenable for a number of reasons. It is historically accurate that Mahmud was seen as the progenitor of the second phase of Muslim rule in the

[1] Despite the seeming fearlessness and directness of many of his advice, towards the end of the text Barani says that readers 'will not withold their appreciation [...] and understand what I have said in the form of open allusions and through hidden insinuations ...'; cf. mss fol. 246b; text, p. 340; trans., p. 502.
[2] There are many ways in which this point can be elaborated in the context of the *Fatāwā*; the discussion that follows seemed to be the most useful route to take bearing in mind the priorities of this dissertation.
[3] Khan, *Fatāwā*, 'Introduction', pp. 39-43.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

subcontinent, starting from the middle of the 11th century. After having gained the throne in Ghazna, Mahmud — with his legendary military prowess — had not only gone on expeditions to other areas in Central Asia, but had famously led a total of 17 expeditions to India. With each consecutive 'raid', he drove further and further into the heartland of the subcontinent, easily defeating the petty kingdoms that spotted its political landscape. Loot was the primary reward of these expeditions since Mahmud's primary political interests lay elsewhere, in the direction west of Ghazna. There is, in fact, no clear agreement amongst scholars about whether Mahmud ever wanted to set up a political empire in the subcontinent or not.

Mahmud's status therefore, both in the subcontinent and in his native Ghazna, remained one of a magnificent warrior, sword-wielding and glorifying the cause of the Faith at least to those who recorded these events in texts. This was not quite accurate and was perhaps informed by the generic styles of writing and recording history in Arabo-Persian literatures of the time; nor was it entirely unfounded, as the evidence of the destruction of the temple of Somnath has led most scholars to suggest. Between these two positions — that of being a stereotypical conquering warrior upholding the banner of Islam in the land of idolaters, and the vexed question of the destruction of the idol of Manat, the pagan goddess of pre-Islamic Arabia who had been in hiding for so long and had finally been found and destroyed[6] — the creative and literary abilities of later scribes of the subcontinent allowed for a lot of eulogisation which should be borne in mind.

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[6] Manāt is one of the many female deities allegedly worshipped by the pagan Meccans, and seen as a 'daughter' of the pre-Islamic 'Allāh', representing Fortune. *Qur'an*, 53:20 says 'Have you thought on Al-Lāt and Al-'Uzzā, and on Manāt [...] They are but names which you and your fathers have invented: God has vested no authority in them. The unbelievers follow but vain conjectures and the whims of their own souls, although the guidance of their Lord has long since come to them.' Cf. *The Koran*, pp. ix, 525 & *n.* 5. Muhammad successfully displaced pagan forms of worship practiced by the Arabs such as of the deities above [see W. Dymock, 'Note on a Form of Fire Worship Amongst the Ancient Arabs', *JASB*, 2, 2, 1890, pp. 209-12]; for an alternative, Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam*, Cambridge, 1999. Shahrastani, in his *Ārā' al-Hind*, provides a sophisticated analysis of idol-worshippers in the Indian subcontinent, seeing Viṣṇu and Śiva as 'angels' whose spiritualism, *ruḥāniyat*, makes them 'persons [*sic*!] associated with creation (who have) become intermediaries in the law'; he also differentiates between idol-worshippers and mere idolaters, the latter clearly being condemned; cf. B.B. Lawrence, 'Shahrastānī on Indian Idol Worship', *Studia Islamica*, 38, 1973, pp. 61-73; see also Y. Friedmann, 'Medieval Muslim Views of Indian Religions', *JAOS*, 95, 2, 1975, pp. 214-21. A.S. Jayakar, 'The Angelology of the Arabs', *JASB*, 6, 6, 1901-3, pp. 304-28 puts 'angels' in a longer-term perspective. See mss fol. 38b; text, p. 58; trans., p. 83, where Barani identifies Manāt with Somnath: 'Manāt, which is

The fact that Mahmud regularly returned to Ghazna with such immense booty was a significant contributing factor to his image as a successful military warrior. The merging of the quelling of the land of the Hindus with that of the destruction of the temple of Somnath and the religious rightness of it on the one hand, and the robustness of Ghaznavid political rule in general in Central Asia on the other, was material for the making of legendary conquests, and so it turned out to be in the *Fatāwā*. After the incident of Somnath, the [textual and historical] transition to being a holy warrior would have been fairly easy within the context of the subcontinent.

Mahmud's heroic status was also abetted by other events and incidents unconnected with the Indian subcontinent; one of these was his patronage to scribes writing in the Persian language who flocked to Ghazna to be part of his court.[7] Firdausi, the renowned author who completed the world famous Persian classic book of kings, the *Shāhnāma*, presented it to Mahmud. Other scribes from different parts of Central Asia adorned his court as well.

In a recently published book *Somanatha: The Many Voices of a History*, Romila Thapar has argued that different corpora of sources in the subcontinent have variously recorded this event according to their own agenda. The Turko-Persian literatures, especially of the 14th century, addressed their own concerns.[8]

> Mahmud being represented as the raider, commanding the passes of the Hindu Kush and carrying out raids to plunder the temple towns of the north Indian plains, was now being superceded by another image, that of the man who laid the foundation of Islamic rule in India [...] the concern of the new historians of the fourteenth century was with seeking continuity for political power and with Turkish connections [...] There was therefore a change of tack and the glorification of plunder, although not discarded

nowadays called Somnath, *manāt ke dar īn vaqt-i ānrā somnāt migūyand*,' but see also the account of Ibn Asīr below where Somnath is *not* identified with Manāt.

[7] While not dealing directly with Mahmud of Ghazni, John Renard, *Islam and the Heroic Image: Themes in Literature and the Visual Arts*, Columbia, SC, 1993, is a useful treatment of the subject of the hero in Islam, especially pp. 5-31, 86-92, 104-119, 235-66; also, Olga M. Davidson, *Poet and Hero in the Persian Book of Kings*, Ithaca, 1994, pp. 1-15, 95-109.

[8] R. Thapar, *Somanatha: The Many Voices of a History*, New Delhi, 2004, p. 60*f*. A more nuanced analysis appears in Richard C. Davis, *Lives of Indian Images*, Princeton, 1999, pp. 88-112, especially pp. 99-109.

was nevertheless, secondary to the glorification of the ideal Islamic ruler. This perspective becomes apparent [...] in the writings of two among the more influential historians, Barani and Isami.[9]

By the time Barani was writing the *Fatāwā*, more than 300 years later, Mahmud's image was confirmed as both religious warrior and progenitor of political Islam in the Indian subcontinent. Amidst the various political insecurities [for instance, of dynastic rule, which affected the fortunes of the courtly nobility in particular] that Barani had witnessed in his lifetime and would have been aware of from earlier times, and in the face of the Mongol onslaught that had all but destroyed caliphal rule and had made serious inroads into the Delhi Sultanate by the mid-14th century when the *Fatāwā* was being written, Mahmud was more than ever an iconic figure with whom all political ideals could be identified. He was already known in the subcontinent as a historical figure, and the *Fatāwā* — by reposing in this person the perfection of all Islamic political virtues — made him a far more complex figure of authority. He was more a religious warrior than a political one, who was chosen by God to be his deputy on earth, and whose actions were *all* in the service of God. The extirpation of non-believers was central to this performance.

Early in the text, Barani sets the tone for the heroism of Mahmud with regards to the conquest of Hindustan; but the contestations in his narratives become all too apparent bearing in mind the realities of political rule in the subcontinent. Passion for the Faith, not greed for booty was the main reason for Mahmud's 'far-flung campaigns'.

[F]rom his childhood until the present time the main question in the sanctuary of Mahmud's bosom has been as to how and through what means all the opponents and molestors of the Faith may be overthrown, and how the leaders of infidelity such as Brahmans, philosophers [...] may be put to sword, and the light of Islam shine and illuminate the inhabited globe.[10]

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[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.
[10] Mss fol. 9b; text, pp. 14-15; trans., p. 19. The reference to Mahmud in the present tense ['until the present time'] complicates our analysis in terms of Time in an important way, to which we will return shortly. Mss fol. 25a, text, p. 38, trans., p. 53 has another incidental reference to Mahmud in the present tense: '... how very careful Mahmud *has been* in consulting the well-wishers of his kingdom ...', emphasis mine.

Barani paints in broad strokes here; he locates the desire for glorification of Islam and martyrdom in Mahmud's childhood; logically, then, the entirety of his life is spent in pursuing that desire ['Sultan Mahmud has spent his life in holy wars, *maḥmūd umr dar jihād-i rāh-i khudā ṣarf karde ast*'][11] and forms the basis of being the quintessential religious warrior, *ghāzī*, that he is projected to be. But Mahmud was unable to extirpate all the Hindus and bring infidelity and idolatry to an end, and by using Mahmud in the present tense Barani manages to draw attention to the continuing need to follow that desire in which Mahmud had admittedly failed, albeit due to the wisdom of Ahmad Hasan Maimandi.[12] The *Fatāwā* thus commands the rulers of Hindustan to fulfil one of Mahmud's unfulfilled desires, the end of 'all the Brahmans of India': 'Now, O sons of Mahmud and O kings of Islam! Set your heart upon the realisation of these important religious undertakings with your heart and soul. Mahmud was unable to attain this [...] wealth, but may be that you are exalted unto it. God willing!'[13]

In his own lifetime, Barani found himself in a sultanate and a court where non-Muslims were easily visible and employed as well. This was an important grouse of his, and throughout the text he accuses the 'Hindus' for regrating, causing problems for the proper functioning of the polity. By presenting Mahmud as a consistent religious warrior, Barani could impose his own ideal solutions via Mahmud, and underline it by elevating him to the position of an ideal example that later sultans should emulate. This was relatively easy to do for Mahmud who already enjoyed a reputation as a hero. The *Fatāwā* is replete with examples of the vicious practices of the Hindus and the honour [through employment] and freedom [practising their festivals and worshipping their gods openly] that was given to them in the time of Barani;[14] some deed needed to be textualised through which Mahmud — the mythical progenitor of Islamic rule in the Indian subcontinent — could be retained as the role model of the *Fatāwā*.

Two important things stand out in this regard: the address to the sultans of Delhi as 'the sons of Mahmud', creating a putative father-son/paternal relationship that informs the

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[11] Mss fol. 9b; text, p. 14; trans., p. 19. Also Steingass, *Dictionary*, s.v. *ṣarf*, p. 786, 'spending'.
[12] See below for the quote.
[13] Mss fol. 12a; text, p. 18; trans., pp. 24-25.
[14] Mss fol. 119b; text, p. 167; trans., p. 238.

entire text;[15] and the glorification of Mahmud's raids in the subcontinent as the defeat of the Hindus, crowned by the destruction of the temple of Somnath.

Paternal admonition was not a new form of writing especially for the 'Mirrors' *genre*;[16] the *Pandnāma*, a text supposedly written by Subuktigin [and of whose provenance Barani may have been aware], is addressed to his son Mahmud,[17] although it was penned by Abu'l Fath. The *Āsār al-Wuzārā* states clearly that it was written by Amir Subuktigīn for his son Mahmud: *pandnāme ke amīr subuktigīn be pisar-i khud sultān mahmūd nivishte ast.*[18] Here, the relationship was one of an actual father and son; in fact, the possibility of giving admonitory advice was enabled through this natural relationship, which also underlined the importance of hereditary and dynastic rule between successors, another abiding concern of the *Fatāwā*.

But this kind of an unproblematic connection could not be drawn between Sultan Mahmud and the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate. Not only was the natural filial connection absent, the dynastic geneaological tree could also not be established since the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate came from varied ethnic and tribal stocks, and were from amongst both slaves and freemen. Part of this problem was addressed in the *Fatāwā* by not mentioning *any* ruler of the Delhi Sultanate by name and thus containing them in one homogeneous category of rulers serving the same purpose, namely, ruling over Hindustan. This also allowed his work to remain in the abstract, intermediate and anonymous zone in terms of audience, and therefore allowed him to draw examples [including faults and follies] from amongst any ruler he wished to, without naming

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15 Apart from the examples that follow, 'paternalism' is evident in other references as well. Note, for instance, mss fols 79b-80a; text, p. 116; trans., p. 163: '... just as the master [*khudāwand*] of a house [...] similarly the king ....' Barani's creativity lies in using the word 'khudāwand', which means both 'king' and 'master'; cf., Steingass, *Dictionary*, s.v. khudāwand', p. 449. I disagree with Khan, 'Fatāwā-i-Jahāndārī', Lahore, 1972, p. 10, *n*. 1, where she suggests that 'Barani addresses all the Muslim kings as the (*spiritual*) sons of Mahmud', since 'mysticism' is particularly missing in the text; emphasis mine.

16 See for instance Sadi al-Dīn Muhammad al-'Awfi's *Jawāmī' al-Hikāyat,* OIOC, Mss no. 595, fol. 236, where he says that the *Pandnāma* gave 'useful counsels and paternal admonition, *waṣīathā-i khūb kard va pandhā-i pidarāne dād'*. More generally, see Davidson, 'Father-Son Dioscurism as a Model of Authority in the *Shāhnāma*', in *Poet and Hero*, pp. 142-55; and Renard, 'The Hero as Father', in *Islam and the Heroic Image*, pp. 185-91.

17 Mss fol. 25b; text, p. 38; trans., p. 54, where he says 'Amir Subuktigin gave Mahmud enormous advice and said, *va maḥmūd rā amīr subuktigin bisyār waṣīyat kardī va guftī.*' Barani does not, however, refer to the *Pandnāma* by name but there is no other known document of political advice that he may be referring to between Mahmud and his father.

18 Saif al-Dīn Hajjī b. Nizām al-Fāzlī, *Āsār al-Wuzārā*, OIOC, Mss. 1569, fol. 88a, line 9.

them. This would no doubt have provided him with an enormous freedom to express his own ideas — which he considered invaluable — without being held responsible for it.[19]

It may also be suggested that because Barani could not present Mahmud as the 'father' telling his 'sons' of their genetic heredity in the way that his own father did in the *Pandnāmā*, an historical continuity — such as carrying on an unfinished task — could perhaps act as a bond across the ages. The admonitory religious tone of it would not be challenged by God-fearing Muslims, and so was the safest bond to make; whether or not it addressed the political concerns of the rulers in the subcontinent is covered by the fractures he himself inserts elsewhere in the text, *zawābit* being a case in point.

Finally, bearing in mind that the *Fatāwā* was not a commissioned text but one which Barani chose to write of his own volition, and thus singularly deficient of a patron, it would serve Barani's purpose well to enhance the homiletic tone of the text through the use of Mahmud as a paternal voice.

The use of another person in order to legitimise one's own ideas was not new to the Arabo-Persian tradition of writing and was, in fact, a common device employed by scribes across the ancient and early medieval courtly world, including the non-Muslim. Abdelfattah Kilito has drawn our attention to this tendency in classical Islamic writings where speech was attributed 'not to imaginary characters but to real persons of unquestioned historical existence or to mythical figures no less present and real to the culture than the personalities of history'. Between the poles thus constructed, Alexander, Anushirvan, Buzurgmihr, Kaimurs, Jamshed, Umar, and most definitely Mahmud in the *Fatāwā*, would seem to fit in, albeit in an inherited [Persian] literary tendency in the *Fatāwā*. 'The resulting apocryphal discourse', says Kilito, 'is not the same thing as "fiction" at all'; rather, it 'is shorn of any feature that might inspire doubts on the reader's part.'[20]

The intention of such an act was not one of subversion; rather, the choice of a heroic figure — even by default — would enhance the stature of the text. Further, in the

[19] Cf. mss fol. 246b; text, p. 339; trans., p. 501 for Barani's admiration of the value of the *Fatāwā*.
[20] Abdelfattah Kilito, *The Author and His Doubles: Essays on Classical Arabic Culture*, trans. M. Cooperson, Syracuse, 2001, p. 4.

tradition of 'Mirrors' literature, individual style was always consumed by the larger motif of the *genre*, given the particular nature of such texts that were normative, didactic, instructive and authoritative in their tone. Usually, this did not pose a problem because either the texts were written by rulers for future incumbents [as in the case of Subuktigin quoted above, and Tahir's letter to his son quoted in chapter 3], or were commissioned texts [as in most other cases, such as the *Siyāsatnāmā*, *Naṣīhat al-Mulūk*, etc]. They were therefore written, according to Robert Dankoff, 'either by a vizier or other adviser to his ruler, or by a ruler himself to his heir'.[21] But for the *Fatāwā*, it was written by someone who was not a member of the courtly aristocracy, rather by one who had been incarcerated on grounds of doubtful loyalty since he had been loyal to the previous sultan.[22] This, added with the fact that he had decided to write the text by himself on a topic like governance, in a *genre* that was both particular and uncommon till then in the Delhi Sultanate, would have further encouraged Barani to seek a 'double', a character whose name would carry enough authority and legitimacy for a text like the *Fatāwā*, dealing as it was with political rule in the Indian subcontinent.

The choice of Mahmud in the *Fatāwā* was both culturally and politically iconic: as hero, ideal, paladin and warrior, he was very easily identifiable in the Islamic world, both textual and otherwise. In the political sphere, he had a particular resonance in the Indian subcontinent: one of its primary points of reference was the demolition of the temple of Somnath. Despite the contradictory and disputable narratives, its image was resolute enough to promote Mahmud eternally as the Islamic hero, who had fulfilled the long-standing Islamic search for the pagan goddess Manat and destroyed her. His exemplarity was therefore located at the intersection of being the ideal g͟hāzī and the heroic sultan; between these two spheres, the religious and the political, Mahmud possessed the ideal image of a life 'valued and admired not merely (or even necessarily) for its practical achievements, but for the moral or ethical or social truths or values

[21] Hajib, *Wisdom of Royal Glory*, trans. Dankoff, p. 4.
[22] The reasons for Barani's incarceration are unclear, and Barani himself provides little information that may be useful. But possible reasons include his opposition to Firuz Shah Tughluq's accession and his support for Muhammad bin Tughluq's son in Delhi. Interestingly, the *Fatāwā*, mss fol. 223b, text p. 306; trans., pp. 451-52, says that if a ruler inherits the throne 'with or without hereditary right, then it is not possible for [him] to rule, unless he has overthrown the helpers, supporters, households and family of the previous king. '

which [he was] perceived both to embody and, through force of example, to impress on the minds of others.'[23]

Having grouped all the sultans of the Delhi Sultanate together in one nameless category of '*pādshahān-i Islām*', and through the employment of Mahmud's voice as a literary device, Barani was therefore able to overcome a number of restrictions as a scribe. His use of Mahmud is neither patterned not predictable. Mahmud appears not just at the beginning of every advice, but almost anywhere, randomly, in the first person as part of alleged conversations, as an example, but in all instances as an ideal sultan embodying the best of all actions and virtues. In fact, his only failing, it would appear, is his inability to bring Hindustan totally under the banner of Islam. But this was hardly to be seen as a fault. The description of Mahmud's attack on the temple of Somnath as part of his Nahrvala/Anhilvada [variable names for Gujarat] campaign in AD 1026 is given in graphic detail, and in typical dramatic imagery. This incident being so central to the making of Mahmud's reputation as an Islamic hero, at least as it appears in texts [albeit sometimes with a measure of doubt], requires some details.[24]

According to the *Fatāwā*, Mahmud had taken an oath 'before attaining his years of discretion, that if he became king, he would overthrow Manat.' So, upon becoming king and sovereign, Mahmud rallied his forces and started from Ghazni, 'by way of Multan, and from there with his large armies he reached Nahrvala. He plundered and ravaged the city of Nahrvala and the territory of Gujarat, and the army got enormous spoils.'[25] The time of year being winter, 'and because of the putridity of the sea, there arose a great hailstorm', as Mahmud camped himself some 40 *karoh*s from Somnath.[26]

The army of Islam had to face great hardships. The village headmen and zamindars of the territory of Sind, who had come with their followers to support the king of Islam began to

[23] G. Cubitt and A. Warren, eds, *Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives,* Manchester, 2000, p. 2.
[24] Note for instance how the most important chronicle for the history of Gujarat, the *Mir'āt-i Aḥmadī* records the story of Mahmud's attack on Somnath with some doubt and a feeling of 'strangeness' [*hikāyat-i ajīb o gharīb*]; Ali Muhammad Khan, *Mir'āt-i Aḥmadī,* ed. M.H. Hasan, Saharanpur, 1928-30, vol. 1, p. 33.
[25] Mss fol. 38b; text, p. 58; trans., p. 83; and A.M.K. Durrani, 'Sultan Mahmud and Multan', *JPHS,* 50, 4, 2002, pp. 19-24; Y. Friedmann, 'The Temple of Multan: A Note on Early Muslim Attitudes to Idolatry', *Israel Oriental Studies,* 2, 1972, pp. 176-82, for the historical context of Multan at the time.
[26] 1 *karoh* = 1.5 miles approx. Cf. T. Raychaudhuri and I. Habib, eds, *The Cambridge Economic History of India, Vol. 1, c.1200 - c.1750,* Delhi, rpt 1984, p. 65, *n.* 4; Steingass, *Dictionary,* p. 1025, s.v. *kuroh* [under *karwa*] calculates it as 'about two miles'.

publish in the army of Mahmud, *va muqaddamān va zamīndārān-i vilāyat-i sind, ke bā jamīʿat-i khud be-yārī dahī lashkar-i islām āmad-i budand va lashkar-i maḥmūd āwāze andākhtand*: 'Manat is a [venerable] God;[27] he [*sic*!] is worshipped by thousands and thousands of Hindus and idol-worshippers of these territories, *ke manāt devi-ye shigarf ast, va maʿbūd chand hazār dar hazār hinduān va mushrikān-i aqlīmhā ast.* This darkness has been cast by the idol on the army, so that it may be warned and return from this place. If in spite of this symbol Mahmud and his army do not wake up, Manat will not leave even one of them alive by next week, *va agar be-dīn-i namūdārī maḥmūd va lashkar-i maḥmūd bīdār nakhwāhand gasht, hafte-ye dīgar, manāt yekī rā az ishān zinde nakhwahad guzāsht.* [28]

Much like the story of Umru Lais and Amir Ismail with which the *Fatāwā* opens, where Amir Ismail recited the holy verses and felt no fear thereafter, Mahmud too — upon hearing these rumours in his army, gave no reply but — 'offered two *rakat*s of prayer in solitude, and placed his forehead on the ground in humility and helplessness before God, the Absolute [...] Before Mahmud was able to finish his prayer, the hailstorm slowed down. After an hour or two the sky cleared, the sun rose, the world was illuminated, and dust was thrown into the mouths of *mushrik*s, idolaters and those weak in Faith.' He then set out for Somnath, and upon arrival 'did to the idol and to the idol-worshippers what will be remembered until the Day of Judgement'.[29] This incident Barani presents, of course, in positive glow, as an example of the 'high resolve' of a king which the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate were being urged to follow.

But this narrative hides within it a number of other interesting strains which seem to problematise its seemingly free-flowing, unquestioned acceptance. First, the role of the 'village headmen and zamindars' who came forward to help the 'army of Islam', but were both aware and wary of the venerability of the goddess Manat. Barani's narrative hints towards the complex nature of cultural interweaving that would be primary on the political agenda of all rulers, namely to be able to exploit local power heads in their favour, for military [and political] gain. If this be true, then it is also underlined by the fact that Mahmud did *not* thereafter try to set up an empire in the subcontinent, thus not using local support to his political advantage. Second, the very complex position that

[27] Khan, 'Fatāwā-i-Jahāndārī', trans., p. 84 says 'great God', but see Steingass, *Dictionary*, p. 756, s.v. 'shigarf' for 'venerable'. I am also unclear why Khan uses 'he' for Manāt, which is clearly identified as female in the *Qur'ān* 53:20.
[28] Mss fols 38b-39a; text, p. 58; trans., p. 84.

Barani constantly struggles between God and the ruler: in this case, God's potency is unchallenged as it is able to tame nature to enable Mahmud to fulfil his long-held ambition, which in turn is in the service of religion. This is in contrast to Barani's other expositions where the earthly ruler is shown to be weak when confronted with nature's wrath [like famines and other natural calamities], despite having the blessings of God.[30] It underlines the constant struggle that the text has in attempting to articulate the inter-relationship between religion and politics for Islamic rulers. In this case, however, the narrative is clearly in favour of the Faith, commending Mahmud's destruction of the temple.

Historical information about Mahmud's raid on the temple of Somnath is scattered and unclear, but it seems to be unanimously accepted that there had been a lot of loot and killing at the time.[31] Ibn Asir, in his *Kamīl ut-Tawārīkh*, seems to be one of the first to have recorded this event and from whom almost all later texts derived [albeit more embellished] narratives; he gives perhaps the most graphic description, summarised below. Note, very importantly, that the idol of Somnath is *not* identified with that of Manat, bringing into focus other possible reasons [like booty] for the raid as well as providing a new reason — the deity's protective powers — for the attack by Mahmud:

In the year 414 H. Mahmud captured several forts and cities in Hind, and also took the idol called Somnat. This idol was the greatest of all idols of Hind [...] When Mahmud was gaining victories and demolishing idols in India, the Hindus said that Somnat was displeased with these idols, and that if he had been satisfied with them no one could have destroyed or injured them. *When Mahmud heard of this he resolved upon making a campaign to destroy this idol, believing that when the Hindus saw their prayers and imprecations to be false and futile, they would embrace the faith* [...] A dreadful slaughter followed at the gate of the temple [...] This temple of Somnat was built upon fifty-six pillars of teak [... the idol] had no appearance of having been sculptured. Yamin ud-daula seized it, part of it he burnt, and part of it he carried away with him to Ghazni, where he made it a step at the entrance of the Jami masjid [...] The worth of what

[29] Mss fol. 41a; text, p. 61; trans., p. 85.
[30] Mss fol. 91b; text, p. 132; trans., p. 80 and *passim*.
[31] The attack on Somnath finds mention in all histories dealing with the period. See M. Habib, *Sultan Mahmud of Ghaznin: A Study*, Aligarh, 1927, pp. 48-55; Pandey, *Early Medieval India*, p. 17; Romila Thapar, *A History of India*, Vol. 1, Harmondsworth, 1966, rpt 1990, p. 229*f*.

was found in the temple exceeded two millions of dinars, all of which was taken. The number of the slain exceeded fifty thousand.[32]

The narrative above covers a lot of ground; first, it makes amply clear that Somnath was attacked not because it was the temple of Manat but because of its supposed potency in protecting the people against the onslaught of Mahmud's military power. The account is important for its singularly military tone as well. The slaughter of Hindus — and that too in great numbers — is seen as part of the larger military action, a result of battles fought between attackers and defenders and not necessarily because of their religious affiliation. And the rewards of the raid are all too obvious from its richness; and it is useful to remember here Barani's caveat that Mahmud was 'not particularly desirous of spoils and wealth' cited earlier.[33] Obviously, there are ample ingredients herein for Mahmud to be converted into a hero for posterity, one that happens very easily and prominently thereafter. Romila Thapar has shown that the poet Sadi played an important role in associating Manat with Somnath;[34] whatever may have been the case, the merger of the two was seen as unquestionable by the time the *Fatāwā* came to be written.

But details visible in Asir's quote have interesting resonances for our analysis of the *Fatāwā*; one is the image that the narrative conjures about the annihilation of the Hindus. The *Fatāwā* contains many examples of the killing/slaughtering of Hindus. Importantly, a lot of them are identified with the military exploits of Mahmud in general, and of Somnath in particular; this should not be surprising for any reason except that Barani invariably presents the Hindus [or 'non-Muslims', to expand the category] as morally degenerate and supine: 'At the time when Mahmud went to Gujarat to overthrow the idol of Manat, he heard there that there was a group of men called Sewra [...] and all of them were materialists, they seduced the wives of grocers,

[32] H.M. Elliot and John Dowson, *The History of India as told by its Own Historians*, 1867-77, Delhi, rpt 1996, Vol. 2, pp. 468-71, emphasis mine. See *ibid.*, pp. 471-78 for other accounts of Mahmud's expeditions derived from this narrative.
[33] C.E. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids: Their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran, 994:1040*, Edinburgh, 1963, pp. 78, 114: 'From the temple of Somnath he is said to have got twenty million dinars worth of spoil.'; 'For the Somnath expedition of 416/1025-26 Mahmud took with him 30,000 regular cavalry plus the volunteers, and these latter were allotted 50,000 dinars from the state treasury for weapons and equipment.'
[34] R. Thapar, *Narratives and the Making of History: Two Lectures*, Delhi, 2000, pp. 28-29. Thapar suggests that the veneration of the idol at Somnath was connected to the busy sea-borne trade traffic at Veraval; *ibid.*, pp. 27-28; see also *idem*, *Somanatha*, pp. 18-37.

and led people towards the false faith of materialism [agnosticism]. Mahmud ordered all of them to be put to the sword, *maḥmūd farmān dād tā hame rā zīr-i tīgh āwardand.*'[35]

Here, slaughter takes the form of a socio-religio-moral corrective, enhancing the profile of the righteous hero. Similar examples are found elsewhere in the *Fatāwā* as well, where the politico-military successes of Mahmud have been explained as a reward for the piety he acquired through acts of religious faith and service to Islam. So, 'the Almighty God, with His great power and extreme mercy, did not allow any enemy to molest or gain ascendancy over (any of) the territories of Mahmud or to obtain supremacy over his kingdom.'[36] Obviously then, if the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate, whom Mahmud speaks to throughout the text, were to emulate his actions, they too would be rewarded similarly by Almighty God. In the case of religious warriors like Mahmud, heroism was a trait in one's righteous personality which needed to be enacted on earth as part of the responsibility of having been chosen to rule ['He has overthrown Manat, the false god of all Hindus and Sindhis, for the pleasure of Allah, *va manāt rā (ma'būd) bātil hame hinduān va sindhiān būd*],[37] the rewards of which were not only assured for the Day of Judgement, but could also be visible in his lifetime on earth.[38]

Almost nowhere in the *Fatāwā* is there an example of the Hindus fighting back the expanding Muslim army; this may be because by the time that Barani was writing, Islamic political rule in the subcontinent had expanded and established enough to be able to view political battles either as those against enemies, or within the empire as rebellions and uprisings. The political career of Mahmud was therefore useful [as was that of the caliph Umar, the other very frequent example in the *Fatāwā*][39] since it was

[35] Mss fol. 11a; text, p. 16; trans., pp. 21-22.
[36] Mss fol. 13a; text, p. 19; trans., p. 26.
[37] Mss fol. 152a; text, p. 209; trans., p. 306.
[38] But there is a continuing realism in the narrative as well; if the pious/heroic destruction of Somnath 'would be remembered till the Day of judgement' when Mahmud would presumably be rewarded, Barani also mentions that 'the year Mahmud returned from Somnath, most of the horses and camels of the army had perished, *dar ān sāl, ke maḥmūd az somnāt bāz āmad, asb o ashtar-i lashkar pīshtar saqat shude būd* '. Mss fol. 171a; text, p. 238; trans., p. 350. Such realism retains an almost enigmatic appeal for the text which constantly struggles between relying on terrestrial and temporal forces.
[39] Umar, one imagines, would not have been a more useful voice for Barani in the context of the Delhi Sultanate [when compared to Mahmud] for obvious reasons of literary and historical cognisance. As caliph of the Rashidun, Umar's caliphate was a period of dramatic politico-religious expansion and so he was a useful political metaphor. But it was also a time of pristine belief, one that had long got over, and for the changed times of the Delhi Sultanate Mahmud would undoubtedly be a more appropriate choice. The choice of Mahmud over Caliph Umar also underlines the essentially political vision of the text and its author.

played out at a time when the lands of battle — of the subcontinent, in the case of Mahmud — were still recent in the political map of Islam in the east. Blood-splattering Hindus being killed mercilessly, and the attendant economic and other benefits of the spoils could therefore act simultaneously as useful and dramatic imageries: 'All the people of Ghaznin have seen and witnessed that Mahmud annihilated so many *rāīs* and *rānās* in the realms of Hind and Sind; he caught hold of their treasures and buried wealth, goods and property; he captured their women, children and subjects as spoil, and brought treasures and buried wealth, *va zan o bachche-i īshān o raiyyat-i īshān rā ghanīmat kard.*'[40] But this is far from what the sultans of the Delhi Sultanate would have wanted to do in the lands that they had now come to settle in and rule; capturing the possessions of their own subject-citizenry would hardly help, and demolishing their temples and converting them into mosques as a regular political policy would surely not aid in attaining another significant political goal in the text, that of striving for prosperity of the subjects of whose individual conditions the ruler would be asked on the Day of Judgement, and more temporally, the stability of political rule that owed so much to respect for the ruler and the office amongst the subjects.[41]

Starting from the 11th century onwards, Mahmud had already become the archetypal hero in a number of normative political texts, 'as a ruler upon whom the princely audiences should model themselves'.[42] His support and patronage to the Sunnis — a point to which Barani returns a number of times, and glowingly: 'in Mahmud's dominions, only the Orthodox Sunni scholars ['*ulamā-i sunnat*] and the men of attainment [*jamāīt-i hunarmandān*] have been allowed to live'[43] — made him 'a particularly appropriate hero', for the Seljuks for instance, who were threatened by Ismailism and radical Shi'ism.[44] Carl Ernst has suggested that the emergence of the Hindu as supine and antagonistic to the Muslims in the subcontinent was a result of the expansion of the Mongols and the destruction of the caliphate, which meant the emergence of Delhi as a refuge of Islam [referred to in chapter 2]. 'The crystalization of

40 Mss fol. 69b; text, p. 102; trans., p. 142; Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*, p. 78: 'From the temple of Somnath he is said to have got twenty million dinars worth of spoil.'
41 Mss fols 69b-70a; text, p. 102; trans., p. 142-43: 'and so many thousand temples, which were the places of worship of the idolaters, became the mosques of the Mussulmans, *ke chandīn hazār butkhāne ke ma'ābad ke but parastān būd, masājid-i mussalmān gasht.*'
42 Davis, *Lives*, p. 97.
43 Mss fol. 10b; text, p. 16; trans., p. 21, as one typically extreme example.
44 Davis, *Lives*, p. 97.

the term "Hindu" as a religious designation took place as a result of the Mongol invasions of Islamic countries [...] the connotations of "Hindu" in early Persian poetry was primarily ethnic; though the religious concept was present to some degree, the Hindu was always opposed to the Turk, not to the Muslim [...] Yet in Persian historical works written in India, especially after the Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century, the opposition of Hindu and Muslim (Persian *musulmān*) becomes proverbial.'[45] Whatever may have been the historical and literary reasons, the *Fatāwā* unabashedly presents Mahmud as its protagonist hero, and the Hindu as the most important enemy.

Fatāwā as *Waṣīyya*

It is useful to mention that while Barani himself refers to the text as *fatāwā*, he also refers to it as a *waṣīyya* [testament]:[46] at least in two opening sentences, this is done through the voice of Mahmud who is writing it for his sons, the future rulers of the Delhi Sultanate.[47] Given the literary derivation of the *genre* of *waṣīyya* writing, such a choice of a term may have performed subtle but important functions for a text that had not been commissioned by any ruler or prince. The identity of the text [both for the author and the readers] itself is therefore problematised when the author makes such a tactical move: the selective use of *waṣīyya* over *fātāwā* brings us back to the centrality of Mahmud in the text, this time from a completely different perspective, that of the bearer of a *genre* of literature.

Chapter 3 has dwelt briefly upon the *genre* of testamentary advice literature, locating it in the evolutionary scheme of general advice literature which was a visible textual feature of Islamic polities. Its appearance in the *Fatāwā* is not very frequent; rather, it is the nature and implications of its usage that make it interesting for our analysis.

The two historical figures with whom the word *waṣīyya* is associated in the text are Anushirvan and Mahmud. In the case of the former, it seems to fit in well since he was a Sassanian, pre-Islamic ruler, and thus belonged to a time when the corpus of 'Mirrors'

[45] C. Ernst, *Eternal Garden: Mysticism, History and Politics at a South Asian Sufi Center*, Albany, 1992, p. 24; C.E. Bosworth, 'Mahmud of Ghazna in Contemporary Eyes and Later Persian Literature', *Iran*, 4, 1966, pp. 85-92;
[46] Steingass, *Dictionary*, s.v. *waṣīyat*, p. 1471.
[47] Mss fols 54b, 167a; text, Advice # 6, 16, pp. 82, 232; trans., Advice # 7, 15, pp. 112, 341.

was nowehere near being as developed as it was when Barani was writing his text. More importantly, 'Mirrors' were undoubtedly most glorious in the court of Mahmud, to whom the famous Firdausi had presented, the *Shāhnāma*. Against this background, it would not be difficult to argue that a *waṣīyya* would *not* be a natural choice for a text that is in the *genre* of the *Shāhnāma*, especially when the text itself considers itself to be a series of diktats, 'legal decrees, judicial sentences'.[48] And it is not as though Barani uses 'testament' as a descriptive term, rather he transforms the *Fatāwā* into a testament of Mahmud, at least momentarily. Advice 6 and 15 open thus:

Sultan Mahmud has given you a testamentary advice, O sons of Mahmud and Kings [on] Earth, you are to know and know for certain, that [...], *sultān maḥmūd waṣīyat karde ast ke ay farzandān-i maḥmūd va ay pādshahān-i rūye zamīn, ma'lūm va muqarrar-i shumā būd, ke* [...][49]

Sultan Mahmud has said in his testament, 'O sons of Mahmud and kings of the earth, you should know and know it well, that [...], *sultān maḥmūd dar waṣāyā-i gufte ast, ay farzandān-i maḥmūd va pādshahān-i rūye zamīn, be-dānīd va nekū be-dānīd, ke* [...][50]

The implications of such a direct reference to a 'proto' [or 'sub'] *genre* of advice literature [since the style of the *Fatāwā* was more developed version of the style of the *waṣīyya* style] could be understood better if seen against the background of functions that such a choice could potentially perform. A *waṣīyya* was a more personalised, direct, confidential and sovereign mode of giving advice in comparison to other homiletic forms of literature, the epistolary form coming close it. It seems possible to suggest — bearing in mind earlier examples of testamentary advice known in Islamic political writings — that the occasional choice of the testamentary referent would both underline and enhance a more direct paternalistic relationship between Mahmud and his 'sons'. It would enhance the authoritative voice of Mahmud within the text, and would also allow Barani to make the text function simultaneously through varied registers. Logically, a reader who had been reading it from the beginning would know that the text was a *fatāwā*, but the chronic use of Mahmud's name, coupled unexpectedly with a

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[48] Steingass, *Dictionary*, p. 906, s.v. *fatāwā*.
[49] Mss fol. 54b; text, p. 82; trans., p. 112.
[50] Mss fol. 167a; text, p. 232; trans., p. 341.

reference to a testament, would be a favourable embellishment in a text that was already very adept at reporting events and incidents, and offering advice from multiple positions of history, geography and non-linear Time.[51]

This was conditioned by the reference to Anushirvan's testament, which Barani refers to on a number of occasions. In the case of Nausherwan [as Barani refers to Anushirvan], the mention of the testament appears in interesting, intersecting ways within the text. In two instances, he is said to be speaking through his testament, at least once addressing his son Hurmuz directly. The instances, in fact, read quite similarly to those of Mahmud quoted above; and that is in itself interesting, because it blends easily and well with the general flow of the text.[52] The form of address is almost identical ['O son, know and beware ....']; at the same time, Nausherwan is shown to refer to earlier testaments on at least two occasions,[53] drawing attention both to the *genre* of testaments and its historicity, and the value of time-tested advice in politics. If the institution of kingship was an unfortunate remnant or adoption from pre-Islamic times that was deemed required in Islamic societies in spite of its contravention of Islamic principles of humility and devotion, then the modes of transmission of political knowledge, textually legitimising sovereign power, were also acceptable. Thus Nausherwan says to his son Hurmuz, 'I am writing this advice to you in accordance with the testament-giving traditions of the sultans, *va īn chand waṣīyyat bar rasm-i waṣāyatī-i salātīn jānab-i tū nivishtam*',[54] something that Barani feels no discomfort in including as acceptable in terms of literary traditions. It may be useful to bear in mind that Subuktigin's *Pandnāma* also used similar forms of advisory address; and Barani says that Mahmud acted 'in accordance with his father's testamentary advice [...], *va maḥmūd nīz bar hukm-i waṣīyat-i pidar* [...]'.[55]

What is interesting in these instances, despite their relative uncommonness in the text, is the meanings that they engender in the minds of the reader. Not only do they transcend literary barriers of time through their application in both pre-Islamic [Nausherwan] and Islamic [Mahmud] times, but the similarity in the form of address that is used in both

51 The question of Time in the *Fatāwā* is addressed later in this chapter.
52 Mss fols 58b-59a, 208b; text, pp. 87, 284-85; trans., pp. 120, 419.
53 Mss fols 59a, 241b; text, pp. 87, 331; trans., pp. 120, 490.
54 Mss fol. 59a; text, p. 87; trans., p. 120.
55 Mss fol. 25b; text, p. 39; trans., p. 54; and also discussed above.

cases, that of addressing their heir-apparent son[s] — perhaps inadvertently — urges the reader to see the entire gamut of advice flowing through multiple but similarly organised [i.e., father-son] chains of transmission, command and authority. In other words, what it allows the *Fatāwā* to do is to enhance the fictional father–son relationship that it is in the constant process of articulating through more identifiably historical generic imageries and literary schemes. It is worth pointing out over here that in other unrelated instances, Barani commends the obedient position of the son, warning of 'disobedience to parents' in times of political misrule.[56]

The employment of such devices may not have performed individually deterministic functions for the reader in the text; but the example of the use of *waṣīyya* has attempted to show that these little, perhaps minor, seemingly intentional, stylistic preferences went some way in the reader's construction and understanding of the narrative. Such tactful insertions added legitimising cohesion to a commanding narrative written by a court scribe who had fallen out of favour; it also formatted more elaborately the nuanced, historically constructed, discursive tone of the text, enabling the author to substantiate the primary narrative through the supporting 'evidence' of similar homilies. The father-son relationship — undoubtedly the dominant motif of the narrative structure — flows from '*jahiliyya*' to Ghazna to Delhi through the paternal voices of Nausherwan to Hurmuz, Subuktigin to Mahmud, and Mahmud to his 'sons'.

Time and Chronology

The use of this literary device — a combination of a [historical] live voice within a relational, discursive mode — played another subtle role in the rhetoric of the narrative. The concept of 'textual time' — how narratives and texts use the idea of 'time' [howsoever understood] — in medieval Indian Persian texts has not been studied in any significant manner to my knowledge.[57] There are some comments about the imagination

[56] Mss fols 123b-124a; text, pp. 172-73; trans., pp. 247-48.
[57] The exception is that of Peter Hardy, 'Pre-Modern Concepts of Time in Indo-Muslim Historical Writing', in I.H. Siddiqui, ed., *Medieval India: Essays in Intellectual Thought and Culture*, Vol. 1, Delhi, 2003, pp. 59-80; M. Juneja 'On the Margins of Utopia — One More Look at Mughal Painting', *The Medieval History Journal*, 4, 2, 2001, pp. 203-40, makes some interesting comments but in the context of the Mughals; more generally, see Aziz al-Azmeh, 'God's Chronography and Dissipative Time: *Vaticinium ex Eventu* in Classical and Medieval Muslim Apocalyptic Traditions', *The Medieval History Journal*, 7, 2, 2004, pp. 199-225. The manner in which I intend to elaborate on textual time is different from that of Hardy's arguments, to which I will return shortly.

of historical time in texts, but they are more in the context of the organisation of classical Islamic texts. Thus, texts usually begin from the time of the Prophet, and trace their way down to the present day, a route that is varied depending on where the text is being written. But 'textual time' remains an under-researched area, definitely so in the context of the Delhi Sultanate.[58]

Civilisationally, the Muslims have always had a very developed sense of time; the prescribed performance of prayers 5 times a day, even if not practiced regularly by an individual, gave knowledge of the passage of time from morning to night. Their inventions and creativity with actual time include the lunar Hijra calendar; their use of astronomical instruments, most importantly the astrolabe; and the alternative notion of the experience of Time that entered Islamic thought with the development of its mystical traditions, especially Sufism. Lived time — in the sense of 'social time' as developed by Durkheim but deviating from it in the final analysis, has been studied brilliantly by Dale Eickelman from an anthropological perspective in a modern Islamic society.[59]

The only work that deals directly with the idea of Time [derived from textual sources] is that of Peter Hardy. Hardy's work is pioneering in the study of Time in Islamic textual sources in the subcontinent, but his concern is more with the representation, understanding and employment of actual time in the writing of texts. This agenda leads him to comment that Barani's use of Mahmud represents the loss of the glorious and pious past of the Prophet and the four caliphs, and he says little else for our interests.[60] Here and elsewhere Hardy's concern is with the representation of 'experienced' and 'lived' Time, whether it be through calendars, clocks, regnal years, events, etc. 'In their

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[58] Close to the interests of this dissertation, see L. Gardet *et al.*, *Cultures and Time*, Paris, 1972; and Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 3 vols, trans., K. McLaughlin and D. Pellauer, Chicago, 1984. But they do not deal with pre-modern Islamic texts in any substantial way, although Gardet's 'Moslem Views of Time and History', in Gardet, *ibid.*, is a more nuanced treatment of the topic from that of Macdonald, n. 59 *infra*.

[59] For a general overview, David A. King, 'Time and Space in Islam', in K. Lippincott *et al.*, eds, *The Story of Time*, London, n.d., pp. 56-75. The information here is derived from: G. J. Whitrow, *Time in History: Views of Time from Prehistory to the Present Day*, Oxford, 1988, pp. 33-36, 77-80; *EI2*, s.v.v. 'asr', Vol. 1, p. 719; 'dahr', Vol. 2, pp. 94-95; 'zaman', Vol. 11, pp. 434-38; the schematic D.B. Macdonald, 'Continuous Re-creation and Atomic Time in Muslim Scholastic Theology', *Isis*, 9, 2, pp. 326-44; Gerhard Böwering, 'Ideas of Time in Persian Mysticism', in Hovannisian and Sabagh, eds, *The Persian Presence*, pp. 172-98; Dale F. Eickelman, 'Time in a Complex Society: A Moroccan Example', *Ethnology*, 16, 1, 1977, pp. 39-55.

[60] Hardy, 'Pre-Modern Conceptions of Time', p. 62.

use of such expressions as *'ahd* (age, epoch), *ruzgar* (age), *dawr* (period), *muddat* (period), *hangam* (time, season) or *az waqa'i' in aiyam* (from the events of those days) it is ambiguous whether the historians conceive time as a river or flow of events, or as a sequence of instants.'[61] This is true for the *Fatāwā* as well. However, it is where Hardy suggests that the only sequences possible for humanity (as represented and deciphered in/from these texts) are those that God has willed and none other that this dissertation begins to differ from his understandings of Time.[62]

The argument here is based on the idea of textual time, or rather how actual, lived and experiential time have been subverted in the text through the use of Mahmud's voice. By keeping Mahmud's voice constant and referring to his target audience — the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate — as Mahmud's 'sons', the text both universalises and particularises the notion of time within it. The text is addressed universally to all rulers of the Delhi Sultanate through its generic tone; at the same time, it is addressed individually to the sultans by invoking a direct paternal relationship. This is a novel way of creating multiple notions of time within the text, and subverting it simultaneously so that at no place is the reader clear about the distance that separates the real, historical Mahmud from the *Fatāwā*.[63] Historical 'facts' and discursive styles further complicate the picture for the reader. This is not unintentional given the frequency with which Barani invokes Mahmud; at the same time, it may be possible that he was perhaps not fully aware of the meaning of this kind of literary trick vis-à-vis the audience. It remains nonetheless a mark of genius from a textual tradition that, as Hardy has shown, was used to far more literal and prosaic notions of referring to Time.

The importance of the analysis of Time in the *Fatāwā* is underlined by the fact that Barani devotes an entire *naṣīhat* to the advantages of 'kings being careful of their time and the value of this blessing'.[64] Given the essentially political nature of the text, Barani's elaboration on the value of Time is interesting in the way he ties it up with the performance of kingship.

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[61] *Ibid.*, p. 60.
[62] *Ibid.*
[63] This impression is enhanced further by the presence of other historical figures who cut across the centuries to meet and converse with one another. What is particular about Mahmud though is his status as the main 'advisor'.

Barani's admonition is direct and clear: kingship is the greatest of all bounties that anyone may be blessed with ['… how can any function be greater […] a man from among the men of this world […] is elevated above the whole of mankind],[65] and the proper recognition of this elevated blessing is 'that the king should realise the value and worth of his time in his life, *ke qadr o qīmat-i auqāt-i umr-i khud*, and should not waste and while away the precious — indeed the most precious of all things — the moments of his life.'[66]

The contents of the advice are typical: the king should be careful about how he spends his time, and in order that the kingdom is governed well, he should allocate time for every task so that he is able to give his full attention to it. This applies both to his daily schedule, as also to the general conduct of his life. A disciplined life, where time is allotted for every task that requires his attention or needs to be performed, would lead to a well-administered kingdom which, in keeping with the overarching motif of the *Fatāwā*, would help the king to attain salvation on the Day of Judgement. This performance is upheld by three sets of examples — of Kaimurs, Alexander and Abu Hazifa Yamani, a companion of Caliph Umar. In each case, the storyline surrounds the salvation that is ultimately achieved by the rulers because they conducted their affairs well on earth, made possible by the proper utilisation of time.[67]

There are some other patterned usages of time in the text as well. First, the king is seen to occupy a space in time, literally. There are frequent references in the text about how the king should bear in mind the importance of the future, of posterity, and act accordingly to ensure his continuing glory: '… so that the glory of your conquests may survive in the world and your virtues and good deeds may (roll) on the pages of time'.[68] Attendant with this is the unpredictability of some of Time's actions — mostly natural calamities, but one which Barani refers to in categories of time [*zamān*] to suggest their regularity — but which indicate the fundamentally powerless position of the ruler against transcendental forces. This, in turn, serves to underline the inferiority of the

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[64] Mss fols 104a-117a; text # 11, pp. 147-63; trans. # 10, pp. 210-34.
[65] Mss fol. 104a; text, p. 147; trans., p. 210.
[66] Mss fol. 104b; text, pp. 147-48; trans., p. 211.
[67] This is a summary of the *naṣīhat*, n. 64 *supra*.
[68] Mss fols 174a-b; text, pp. 239-40; trans., p. 354.

ruler vis-à-vis God and his Heavenly kingdom for which the ruler should constantly aspire.

Second, and most common is the linear notion of time, one that starts from a golden past of the time of the Prophet and his Companions, and gets progressively corrupt and worse. Kingship — an institution otherwise opposed to Islam — is seen as a necessity borne out of that moral decline of mankind, for which God has to choose one from amongst the people to keep them on the right path. The present is seen as bad, getting increasingly worse, marked by many vices, and the king is religiously duty-bound to order this chaos and hope for a better future. This is a fundamentally different position than that available for the Mughals where, as Monica Juneja argues, 'utopia was no longer conceived of as unattainable, it was neither a projection onto the future nor did it stand for a lost ideal of the distant past, to be retrieved at a moment of final triumph. Rather [...] it represented a vision located in the present, one which *constituted* the present: time was no longer imagined in these particular representations as structured in linear progression, the present was both a moment and seemed to extend infinitely.'[69] The *Fatāwā* locates itself between the two poles of 'utopia', one past and one future, sustained through its various literary devices of command and emulation, thus locating kingship as a redressal of present degeneration. Kingship here has a 'temporal durée', concerned with Time in an unglorious present; the ideal is not located in the here and now, but in a future which may be achieved through guidance. All advice in the text command the ruler to actions which will help restore and sustain glory and power more than what exists.

Third, and as referred to earlier, is the notion of the passage of the king's life in the performance of kingly duties which would lead him to salvation. This is interesting in the way in which it is articulated in the text; in one instance at least there is a direct connection made with spiritual attainment. Barani would have been well aware of the tensions between religious and spiritual perfections that marked the religio-political landscape of the Delhi Sultanate in his lifetime, and his reference to spiritual attainment through the performance of kingly duties may carry with it strains of this tension: 'He

[69] Juneja, 'On the Margins of Utopia', p. 206, emphasis in original: this assertion is most certainly related to the sense of political maturity that the Mughals felt in the subcontinent, one that was singularly absent in the Delhi Sultanate.

should spend (his time) in the affairs of the government and administration in such a way, that he may be led to the high spiritual categories of nearness to God.'[70]

Fourth is the notion of cyclical time, one that Irfan Habib refers to in his analysis of Barani's *Tārīkh*.[71] While Habib argues for a cyclical, dynastic preference and pattern in Barani's historical chronicle, where the fortunes of each dynasty is constantly held to ransom by the ability of the performers/kings, and this in turn lends to the entire structure a certain instability, in the *Fatāwā* this tendency is less explicit. The only instance in which it comes up is with reference to the usurpation and kingship; and Barani gives to Time a haughty tone not easily found elsewhere in the text.

Time laughs at them and utters in its own language: 'O, you foolish, stupid, arrogant, blind, thoughtless and wanton creatures, know for certain that whatever you have said, done, heard and planned with regard to your predecessors, others will also within a short period undertake, propose, plan and design about your wives, children, tribes and followers the same pattern, and they will do just as you have done. Then why do you wield your two-handed sword for your own death and ruin by attempting to overthrow your predecessors and their families?'[72]

The folly and inevitability of certain kingly acts is announced here not through the voice of Mahmud, but through the voice of Time, an agent more universal than the hero himself. While this remark contains within it Barani's long-standing concerns about dynastic stability and preservation of the old, aristocratic families — an issue over which he dwells at length elsewhere in the text — here it is addressed through the agency of Time. There are other more latent references to cyclicality, such as the constant urge to 'proper governance' which would redeem society, but these are diluted, in my opinion, by the expressed desire of the text to create an Islamic dominion, a sovereignty committed to upholding the values of religious Islam. But even these are framed by a notion of a golden past, one that was irrevocable but which should be striven in essence if it was not practically possible. Connected with this is Barani's unIslamic but still strident admonition against the appointment of the low-born. Time, according to him, also 'reveals the ingratitude, lack of wealth, disloyalty to the salt, and the wickedness of the mean, the low, the worthless and the ignoble. In its own language,

[70] Mss fol. 104b; text, p. 148; trans., p. 211.
[71] Habib, 'Barani's Theory of the Delhi Sultanate'.

Time says: "Beware! Do not exalt the low-born and the base to greatness for you will receive injury from them."'[73] The voice of Time appears again to warn kings of inevitability and decline.

Fifth, in an interesting instance, one which adds another twist to the narrative, Barani complicates textual time by referring to Mahmud's reign in the present and continuous: 'It is 36 years to this day that Mahmud has been carrying on the affairs of his government …'[74] This example, while being minor in that it appears only once, fundamentally alters the impact of the literary device of the voice of Mahmud by bringing him in the present. His removal from the legendary past, central to his status as a hero, is a peculiar feature of the text. Its singular appearance may mean that it was an act of Barani's haste, folly or literary creativity, but it remains an unclear reference. A possible reason may have been that by doing this Barani was trying to enhance the genuineness of his text as spoken through the mouth of Mahmud, but there is insufficient evidence within the text to dwell further upon this.[75]

The argument about 'textual time' that this disseration is trying to make deals with other, implicit notions of time, its meaning and imageries conveyed to the reader most dramatically through the use of the voice of Mahmud. This creative stroke is enhanced by the constant interplay between 'utterance' and 'statement'.[76] Paul Ricoeur argues that this distinction — between 'utterance', such as those attributed to Mahmud and other historical figures in the first person, with which the *Fatāwā* is replete, and 'statement', those that Barani himself says — results, for Time, in 'a parallel capacity of being divided into the time of the act of narrating and the time of the things narrated.'[77] Further,

[72] Mss fol. 226a; text, p. 309; trans., p. 457.
[73] Mss fol. 220b; text, p. 301; trans., p. 444.
[74] Mss fol. 158b; text, p. 219; trans., p. 320.
[75] Phillip B. Wagoner, *Tidings of the King: A Translation and Ethnohistorical Analysis of the* Rāyavācakamu, Hawaii, 1993, has suggested a similar analysis for his text, where the author locates the text through various literary devices in an earlier time frame. It may be pointed out here that V.R. Mehta, 'The Imperial Vision: Barani and Fazal', in *idem, Studies in Indian Political Thought*, Delhi, 1998, p. 138, sees Barani as a courtier of Mahmud at Ghazni.
[76] Peter Hardy, 'The Muslim Historians of the Delhi Sultanate: Is What they Say Really What They Mean?', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, 9, 1, 1964, pp. 59-63.
[77] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 2, p. 5.

> innovation is produced entirely on the level of discourse, that is, the level of acts of language equal to or greater than the sentence [...] With narrative, the semantic innovation lies in the inventing of another work of syndissertation — a plot. By means of the plot, goals, causes and chance are brought together within the temporal unity of a whole and complete action.[78]

Most of this is linear: Mahmud is presented as commanding his 'sons' across the ages, and successively. The semantic arena thus created — the subject of kingship ring-fenced with advice of correct action and behaviour through command and example, both involving the figure of Mahmud — is, in terms of our understanding of textual time, the 'plot'. It performs many functions, and at multiple levels simultaneously. Mahmud speaks from the past; in command and as example; in one instance, he lives in the present; he arches back and forth over centuries to address and participate with various audiences; he makes statements, asks questions and provides answers; and he embodies the many tensions of kingship in the service of religion. He cuts across time and space, and gives to the text a non-linear yet cumulative, accretive meaning. His form of address — to his 'sons' — and the absence of the name of any ruler so addressed allows the text to be read as one directed to an unspecified yet targeted audience. The rulers of the Delhi Sultanate [to whom the *Fatāwā* was arguably directed], are therefore addressed both individually and cumulatively, giving to the reader the feeling of a direct communication with the legendary hero, and simulatenously putting him in the privileged pool of the successors of Mahmud, along with all the other rulers of the Delhi Sultanate.

The text contains a sense of being located in the present instant, and stretching into posterity; its meanings may be understood in isolation, and in cumulation. The hero, in other words, is the agent, embodiment and carrier of textual time, where meaning is rendered by placing him in a perfect past, one that is connected to the narrative present through 'traditions that command respect exclusive of any criticism and hence of any upheavel.'[79] The 'epic distance' thus created sustains the potency of the hero within the text; and his portrayal [in conversations, for instance] retains his realism.

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[78] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. ix.
[79] *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 155.

This is a unique feature of the *Fatāwā*, one that I believe allows us to view the text in new ways. There is no other text from this period that allows us to make a case for the idea of Time contained in multiple modes within one text so explicitly. The employment of the voice of Mahmud in the manner described above lends to the text an array of possible meanings, the world of the text being located at the intersection of the historical-fictional interweave.

King and Sin

Mahmud's realism is sustained in the text in other ways too — through references to events, characters, etc. But there are also some less tangible but 'human' ways in which the importance of Mahmud the hero is brought to the reader. Continuing with his admonitions about the proper utilisation of Time, Barani says that while the pursuit of pleasures of the sensual self must be abhorred by rulers, Mahmud 'has still not totally prohibited all enjoyment and pleasure to you, who are the sons of Mahmud .... For Mahmud himself in his youth and middle age has enjoyed much of luxury and pleasure, and he has indulged in sensual pleasure and enjoyment in numerous ways.'[80]

Attention to sensual pleasure is also drawn by default through other references in the text: the importance of maintaining a balance in all kingly action; evading excess; avoiding sin; religious righteousness; being an ideal; spending time properly; etc. For the mythical progenitor of kingly rule, Kaimurs, kingship and governance was a duty which, if done properly, would not leave any time: 'I am not free from the affairs of the kingdom even for a single moment.' And so, 'I have said good-bye to the sensual self [...] I am afraid lest any part of my time be spent in worthless things, frivolity or sin ...' After all, in the final analysis, the ruler is answerable to God for all his actions, 'I may be at a loss to account for it (to God).'[81] The quote becomes significant when we note that despite this clear declaration from a mythical hero [Kaimurs], Barani makes references to the real hero [Mahmud] indulging in sensual pleasures, perhaps even of

[80] Mss fol. 109a; text, p. 153; trans., p. 220.
[81] Interestingly, this is part of a 'conversation' between the incumbent Kaikhusrau and the mythical Kaimurs, and is allegedly quoted in the *Tārīkh-i Kisrawī*['History of Caesars']. Mss fol. 105a; text, p. 148; trans., p. 213.

the 'sinful' variety (sodomy): 'And in his love for the beautiful, no king has obtained a reputation like Mahmud.'[82]

Historically, Mahmud has three main 'reputations': as a warrior, as an incapable patron of the famous Firdausi, and as a lover of Ayaz, a favourite slave-boy.[83] Whatever may have been the historicity of the Mahmud-Ayaz relationship, it is evident that from the 11th century onwards it became a staple imagery in Persian literary traditions. Annemarie Schimmel identifies 'Mahmud and Ayaz' as one of several pairs 'which necessarily belong together, so that when one is found in the verse the other can also be expected.'[84]

A number of interesting themes emerge: first, the obvious one of a successful military warrior, a *ghāzī* whose heroic actions led to the formation of the Delhi Sultanate; coupled with this were the attendant advantages of such talents which would enable the abolition of paganism [Somnath] from the world and the efflorescence of Islam. Second, the selective fallout of the Mahmud-Firdausi episode. While stalwarts of literature like Firdausi, of whom Barani would surely have been aware through the kind of education he received, saw Mahmud's inability to appreciate him because of his slave heredity, it does not seem to come in the way of Barani's treatment of Mahmud as his hero despite his extreme opposition to the elevation of the low-born. Third, the fact that Firdausi — undoubtedly a more celebrated author, and particularly of the *genre* of texts to which the *Fatāwā* belongs — also wrote a satire in Mahmud's name does not diminish Mahmud's status as the hero of the *Fatāwā*. Mahmud's court had been the centre of much literary activity, and great names like Unsuri and Farrukhi adorned his court. And fourth, his emergence as a favourite symbol of passionate love in literature, 'the king, who became his slave's slave'.[85]

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[82] Mss fol. 110a; text, p. 154; trans., p. 221.

[83] Re. Firdausi, it is believed that after he presented the *Shāhnāmā* to Mahmud, he was unhappy with the reward and left the court of Ghazna. 'Incensed, he wrote a satire against Mahmud who, being the son of a Turkish military slave, did not know a true man's value.' The impact of this is captured in Jami's verse: 'Gone is the greatness of Mahmud, departed his glory, and shrunk to "he knew not the worth of Firdausi" his story'. Cf. Annemarie Schimmel. *A Two-Colored Brocade : The Imagery of Persian Poetry*, Chapel Hill, 1992, pp. 108, 306 *n*. 3.

[84] Schimmel, *ibid.*, p. 39. See also *ibid.*, p. 131 where she says that Mahmud-Ayaz were 'the most unusual' loving couple in Persian poetry.

[85] *Ibid.*, p. 130. Schimmel goes further to say that this offered 'mystical poets a wonderful topic for pointing to the love relationship between man and God, and in the non-mystical tradition numerous epics

These are important indicators for the subcontinental context of the *Fatāwā*, where Mahmud's image was a complicated combination of all of the above themes. Also, the passage of time between Firdausi [who was a contemporary of Mahmud] and Barani [who was living in the Delhi Sultanate] had obviously meant that his immediate literary reputations had been overshadowed by other literary imageries [as a military hero], but also that of his love for his slave.

Mahmud's court was famous, at least according to Barani, for 'pleasure parties' [*majlis*es]: '... and many humourous and witty things were uttered in front of him ... Boon companions, music, chess, nard, wit and humour — there was a superabundance of these things in the pleasure parties of Mahmud ... There was nothing lacking in them.' Other details of the description of these parties mention Mahmud's consumption of alchohol, though never so much to miss his prayers; priority to religious and governmental affairs if something were to come up during the parties; and that most of the time in these parties was spent listening to the 'histories of earlier Sultans'.[86] While Barani was surely not a personal witness to any of these parties, it may be interesting to note that in his *Tārīkh* he talks about the grand parties [*majlis*es] that were held in the court of Sultan Ala al-Din Khalaji, about which he had heard from his father and uncle.[87]

Whether it be Mahmud or Ala al-Din Khalaji, *majlis*es seem to have been a reality of political Islam. And since this did not fit into the other political rhetoric of the *Fatāwā*, that of measure and temperance, infrequent caveats to royal exception, freedom from sin, etc. are invoked in the text. This realism and tension is best captured in the following quote:

Sultan Mahmud, with so many illustrations and similes has shown you (the advisability) of avoiding the pursuit of pleasure and the allottment of your time to the management of

were composed to celebrate the fascinating relation between the king and the slave.' *Ibid.*; see also pp. 367-68, *n.* 2 for further references to the Mahmud-Ayaz motif in the Persian literary tradition.

[86] Mss fol. 110a-b; text, pp. 154-55; trans., pp. 221-23. This counterbalancing of Mahmud's 'virtues' and 'vices' within the context of the *majlis* should be seen as part of Barani's attempt to present Mahmud as an 'ideal'. What is important is that the 'earthly ideal' includes vices [like sensual pleasures] in him, unlike the legendary hero Kaimurs.

[87] As discussed in chapter 2.

governmental affairs, has still not totally prohibited all enjoyment and pleasure to you, who are the sons of Mahmud and to kings of Islam. For Mahmud himself in his youth and middle age has enjoyed much of luxury and pleasure, and he has indulged in sensual pleasure and enjoyment in numerous ways.[88]

We therefore return to the issue of sensual pleasure, this time with the tacit support of Mahmud on this matter. In chapter 4, I have shown how Barani argued that the ruler was beyond committing sin; and simultaneously that the degree of permissibility and acceptability of a ruler's violation of Islamic forbiddance was greater than that of others because of his chosen, elevated status.

References to sodomy in the text are infrequent but prominent, and even from these few references, a case for its prevalence in the Delhi Sultanate may be made with some conviction. Early in the text, Barani says that the ruler should aspire to cleanse at least the capital city of all vices, and prevent sodomy: 'the sodomists [*makhānīs*][89] [should] be prevented, by being flogged, from behaving like women [*be aurat*]'.[90] This reference, along with other references, should be seen as the prevalence of sodomy amongst the people, especially the army.[91] While advising the king on how to deal with soldiers on distant campaigns, Barani says that the king 'ought not to investigate into the possession of [...] handsome slave boys'.[92] In a supporting anecdote elsewhere, Barani quotes from the *Ma'āsir-i-Khulāfā*, that after the death of Harun al-Rashid, in Baghdad 'pleasure homes were constructed, and adultery and sodomy became widespread. Male prostitutes and sodomites fixed their rates and sat openly in places meant for sinning.'[93]

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[88] Mss fol. 109a; text, p. 153; trans., p. 220.

[89] Literally, 'low people', cf., Steingass, *Dictionary*, p. 1198, but read as 'sodomists' by Khan, 'Fatāwā-i-Jahāndārī', pp. 16-17, in the context of 'behaving like women'.

[90] Mss fol. 8b; text, p. 13; trans., pp. 16-17.

[91] There are a fair number of studies on same-sex relationships in Mamluk armies in Egypt and elsewhere in the Islamic political world. See the essays in Stephen Murray, Will Roscoe *et al.*, *Islamic Homosexualities: Culture, History and Literature*, New York, 1997.

[92] Mss fol. 175b; text, pp. 241-42; trans., p. 356. Note also how Barani mentions that in order to ensure that soldiers do not desert the army camp, 'all things (which) are needed by God's creatures or which their hearts thrive for, *and which they can find in the capital*, ought to be available in the army camp'. These include [amongst other things] beer, wine, and hemp. The king should also provide what is 'required by religion, wordly life, *desire and passion*', so that the soldiers will '*imagine the army camp to be the capital*'. Mss fols 175a-b; text, pp. 24-42; trans., pp. 355-56; all emphases mine.

[93] Mss fol. 125b; text, p. 174; trans., p. 250.

The importance of these scattered references suggest a few things for our concerns. Sodomy, although religiously forbidden in Islam,[94] was common and accommodated within society both in the Delhi Sultanate and in the wider Islamic political realm. Barani suggests its appearance in Baghdad as a result [or an indicator] of the chaos that followed the death of Haroun al-Rashid ['the City of Peace became the City of Ignobles'],[95] thereby drawing attention to the importance of having a ruler, and that too one who is religously driven in his virtues. At the same time, through the example of the army, Barani is also saying that the same ruler, in certain situations, should overlook various sinful actions, including sodomy, in the interest of politics. Further, this is in complete contradiction to another quote elsewhere in the text where Alexander is quoted as saying [to Aristotle]: 'I have attained to salvation [...] not wasting my time uselessly and frivolously, or in the satisfaction of my sensual desires'.[96] By the logic of this statement, then, Barani is recommending actions for rulers which would *not* enable them to attain salvation, for he asks them to accommodate various forbidden actions, and also concedes to the rulers themselves practicing sinful activities. Such contradictions in the text are not indicators of the weakness of his arguments; rather, they highlight the vexed and agonised relationship that the political office of kingship shared with the admonitions of the religion.

It is against this background that the reputation of Mahmud as a lover of Ayaz needs to be situated. There is no clear information about the historicity of this story, but as mentioned earlier, the Mahmud-Ayaz duo were an established motif in literary *genres* by the time Barani was writing the *Fatāwā*.[97] There is no direct reference to this in the *Fatāwā*: the closest one can come to deciphering this is in the context of Barani's descriptions of Mahmud's parties, when he says that 'in love for the beautiful, no king

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[94] Note that Barani considers '(open) sodomy' an offence punishable by death; mss fol. 148a; Text, p. 204; trans., p. 297. Murray, Roscoe *et al.*, *Islamic Homosexualities*, remains a seminal study on the issue of homosexuality in Islam; see also E.K. Rowson, 'The Effeminates of Early Medina', *JAOS*, 111, 4, 1991, pp. 671-93; J.W. Wright Jr. and E.K. Rowson, *Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature*, Columbia, 1997; S. Schmidtke, 'Homoeroticism and Homosexuality in Islam: A Review Article', *BSOAS*, 62, 2, 1999, pp. 260-66; A. Harvey, ed., *The Essential Gay Mystics*, New York, 1997, pp. 85-103.
[95] Mss fol. 125b; text, p. 174; trans., p. 250.
[96] Mss fol. 107a; text, p. 151; trans., p. 216.
[97] On Ayaz, see *EI2*, s.v. 'Ayaz', Vol. 1, p. 780; and Zulālī's *masnawī*, *Maḥmūd va Ayāz*, *c.* 1615 AD, OIOC, Mss no. 403. Khan, 'Fatāwā-i-Jahāndārī', pp. lxi-lxii, says that 'for historians who till now drew upon the Khosroes and the Caesars [pre-Byzantine kings], Mahmud was a perfect model for their compositions.'

has obtained a reputation like Mahmud.'[98] Considering his other reputations did not have to do much with 'beauty', the possibility of the reference to the Ayaz story remains high, especially since it was a known theme in Islamic writings of the time. This would not be out of place for a number of reasons; not only was homoerotic love well-known in the Islamic world, it was particularly so in highly militarised environments.

While this may or may not apply to the Mahmud-Ayaz relationship, if there ever had been one, it remains that the motif was available as a resource for writers in the 14th century. Importantly, this was not in contradiction to the image of a valiant warrior; love for a 'beautiful slave boy' fitted in well with other unbridled imageries of conquest and victory. Barani's references to sodomy, yet his complete omission of any reference to the Mahmud-Ayaz relationship, may be attributed to his own conservatism.[99] But, despite this agony, it is important to underline that Barani includes in his image of the ideal hero, Mahmud, sensual pleasures; it is this realism about Mahmud that makes him 'humane', an image that fitted in well and buoyed the larger-than-life heroic image.[100]

Raziyya: Approximating Masculinity

Chapter 2 has tried to show that Sultan Iltumish's daughter, Raziyya, who ruled from Delhi for about 4 years between AD 1236-40, made a significant contribution to the

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[98] Mss fol. 110a; text, p. 154; trans., p. 221; but bear in mind Barani's comment about the *Fatāwā* at the end of the text: 'understand what I have said in the form of open allusions and through hidden insinuations with regard to principles, illustrations and examples.' Mss fol. 246b; text, p. 340; trans., p. 502.

[99] Saleem Kidwai has identified strains of 'same-sex love' in Barani's *Tārīkh*, focussing on the Khalajis. Cf., Ruth Vanita and Saleem Kidwai, eds, *Same-Sex Love in India: Readings from Literature and History*, Delhi, 2001, pp. 131-35. Kidwai makes an interesting point when he says that Barani's condemnation of male-male attachments was not on the grounds of either *sharī'a* or *zawābit*, rather the loss of 'better judgement' associated with same-sex love which led to the surrendering of 'crucial instruments of power — fear, grandeur, and majesty'. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

[100] Mahmud remains a 'hero' in modern literatures as well. For a useful overview of the Mahmud-Ayaz motif in later times, Scott Kugle, 'Sultan Mahmud's Makeover: Colonial Homophobia and the Persian-Urdu Literary Tradition', in Ruth Vanita, ed., *Queering India: Same-Sex Love and Eroticism in Indian Culture and Society*, New York, 2002, pp. 30-46; Mahmud also remains an enduring military hero, especially for children: cf., Rashid Haroun, *Mahmud of Ghazni*, (Heroes of Islam Series), London, 1981. For the trajectory of Mahmud in modern historiography, Peter Hardy, 'Mahmud of Ghazna and the Historian', *Journal of the Panjab University Historical Society*, 14, 1962, pp. 1-36; Schimmel, *Two-Colored Brocade*, p. 131, quotes a verse from Muhammad Iqbal in whose poetry 'Love appears as the Mahmud who destroyed Somnath, the idol Temple of Intellect'. More recently, Kunal Basu, *The Miniaturist*, London, 2003, is a fictional story about male-male bonding between the Mughal emperor Akbar and the artist Bihzad.

nature of service loyalty of royal supporters, both at court and in the city of Delhi.[101] Her radical decision to introduce an ethnically and racially new slave within the court — *habs̲h̲īs* — was probably intended to check the growing power of the Turkish ex-slaves of her father. Second, her equally radical step of addressing the community of believers in the Friday mosque to help her gain the throne once she was ousted by the male slave-courtiers in the immediate aftermath of Iltutmish's death is also an unparalleled example in the history of the Delhi Sultanate.[102] These, coupled with the fact that she was a woman ruler in an Islamic polity, and a ruler in her own right — not a regent or a dowager — who had inherited the throne when there were other male claimants present, made her a unique example in the political map of the time.[103]

Juzjani, whose *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsirī* predates Barani's *Fatāwā* by many decades, and who was a contemporary of Raziyya, wrote eloquently [albeit very briefly] about her. From Barani's *Tārīkh*, we are aware that Barani had read Juzjani's text, and had decided to continue his history from where Juzjani had ended his *Tabaqāt*. It is therefore almost baffling why Barani's *Fatāwā* makes absolutely no suggestion of a woman ruler, or even it's possibility. This is worth drawing attention to because the attributes of a good

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[101] Raziyya's presence on the throne is confirmed by all forms of evidence. Cf. Z. A. Desai, 'Fragmentary Inscription of Queen Radiyya from Uttar Pradesh', *EIAPS*, 1966, pp. 1-3; C.J. Brown, *The Coins of India*, Calcutta, 1922, Plate VIII, between pp. 48-49 [Plate 9]. It is interesting to note that coins were minted in her [subordinate] name during Iltutmish's reign, and [of course] in her own name in her reign as far away as Lakhnauti; cf. H. Nelson Wright, *The Coinage and Metrology of the Sulṭāns of Deḥlī*, Delhi, 1936, p. 41, nos 161b-d. Apart from Juzjani, *Tabaqāt*, *n.* 104 *infra*, see also A.B.M. Habibullah, 'Sultanah Raziah', *The Indian Historical Quarterly*, 16, 1940, pp. 750-52; Jamila Brijbhushan, *Sultan Raziya: Her Life and Times*, Delhi, 1990; Jackson, 'Radiyya'.

[102] Jackson, *ibid.*, p. 184*f.*

[103] There seem to be only two other comparable examples of women who became queens despite there being male claimants to the throne in this period; in the Islamic world, Saiyyida al-Hurra, the Sulayhid queen of Yemen in the 11th century, and in the subcontinent, Rudrama Devi, the 13th century Kakatiya queen of Andhra. See Farhad Daftary, 'Sayyida Hurra: The Ismaili Sulayhid Queen of Yemen', in Hambly, ed., *Women in the Medieval Islamic World*, pp. 117-30; and Cynthia Talbot, 'Rudrama-devi, the Female King: Gender and Political Authority in Medieval India', in D. Shulman, ed., *Syllables of Sky: Studies in South Indian Civilization in Honour of Velcheru Narayana Rao*, Delhi, 1990, pp. 391-40. The 'harem' was another highly politicised arena where women played a powerful role, but none occupied the seat of power. See Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*, New York, 1993; and Ruby Lal, 'The Domestic World of the Mughals in the Reign of Babur, Humayun and Akbar (1500-1605)', unpublished D.Phil dissertation, University of Oxford, 2000. Wink, *Al-Hind*, vol. 2, p. 157 & *n.* 55 suggests that 'Raziyya's rise dates from the capture of the Queen Mother [Rukn al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh's mother], so that the transfer of power was really from one woman to another', though he does not suggest that the Queen Mother ever occupied the throne. As a sensitive overview of women in the Islamic public sphere in history, see Gavin R.G. Hambly, 'Becoming Visible: Medieval Islamic Women in Historiography and History', in *idem*, ed., *Women in the Medieval Islamic World*, pp. 3-27. Insufficient evidence prevents a similar narrative for Raziyya.

Plate 9

Bilingual coin issued in the reign of Sultan Raziyya
[From: C.J. Brown, *The Coins of India*, Calcutta, 1922, detail from Plate 8.]



Obverse: Horseman to right; around [in Nagari]: *Śrī Hamīrah*, 'the Amir'.
Reverse [in Arabic]: *As-sulṭān al-Ā'zam Raziyat al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn*

Muslim ruler that Barani seeks or impresses upon incumbents are all applicable to Raziyya. According to Juzjani, Raziyya was

a great sovereign, and sagacious, just, beneficent, the patron of the learned, a dispenser of justice, the cherisher of her subjects, and of warlike talent, and was endowed with all the admirable attributes necessary for kings ....[104]

What could be the possible reasons for Barani to not include any reference to women rulers — to 'daughters' of Mahmud — in the *Fatāwā*? First, in Islamic scholasticism, the idea of a woman being a ruler of an *ummāh* was not very forthcoming. Various readings of the *Qur'ān* had been understood to mean that a woman, considered inferior in intellect to a man, could possibly not lead a community of believers when God himself had forbidden it.[105] Despite his high praise and egalitarian articulation of Raziyya's virtues, Juzjani concludes the above passage by this rueful remark: '... as she did not attain the destiny, in her creation, of being computed among men, of what advantage were all these excellent qualifications unto her?' This coincides with the *Fatāwā*'s consideration of 'manliness, *rujūlīyat*' as a 'necessary condition' for the sultans of Islam.[106]

Juzjani's statement may contain the essence of why Barani — or no other writer of the time — considered the theoretical possibility of a woman ruler in Islam, although there were such examples available in history. Parts of the earlier section of this chapter have

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[104] Juzjani, *Tabaqāt*, p. 457; trans., Raverty, vol. 1, p. 637.

[105] For a traditional overview with relevant *Qur'ān*ic references, see G. Korvin, 'Women's Leadership through the History of Islam', *Hamdard Islamicus*, 22, 3, 1999, pp. 17-51; but such positions have been critically analysed and challenged in a series of recent writings: see Asma Barlas, *"Believing Women" in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'ān*, Austin, 2002; Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*, New York, 1999; the somewhat polemical Fatima Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, trans., Mary Jo Lakeland, Cambridge, 1993; and more generally, Fedwa Malti-Douglas, *Woman's Body, Woman's Word: Gender and Discourse in Arabo-Islamic Writing*, Princeton, 1991.

[106] Juzjani, *Tabaqāt*, *ibid.*; trans., Raverty, vol. 1, p. 638; *Fātāwā*, mss fol. 168b; text, p. 234; trans., p. 343. Steingass, *Dictionary*, p. 570, s.v. 'rujūlīyat' for 'manliness, virility'. Sunil Kumar spoke about this 'computation' in an unpublished seminar paper presented at St Antony's College, Oxford, 19 May 2003. Note that the Yemeni Ismaili position is similar with regards to al-Hurra, where the theologian al-Sultan al-Khattab argues that her 'female body was no more than a body envelope covering her original male essence'. Cf., Samer Traboulsi, 'The Queen was Actually a Man: Arwā bint Ahmad and the Politics of Religion', *Arabica*, 50, 1, 2003, pp. 96-108. Women as 'women' were portrayed 'as a threat to the established political and social hierarchy' in medieval Islamic texts: cf., Soheila Amirsoleimani, 'Women in Tārīkh-i-Bayhaqī', *Der Islam*, 78, 2, 2001, p. 229, and especially pp. 245-48 for the position of women in Islamic, particularly Ghaznavid, politics.

expanded on how Mahmud was addressing his sons throughout the text, these sons being the future rulers of the subcontinent. This may be tied, in this particular scenario, with Barani's compulsive preoccupation with hereditary [and thus dynastic] rule. His constant lament is that rulership in his times was not aware of the need to maintain power, a fact that may have been prompted by the various dynastic changes that he had himself witnessed in his lifetime.[107] This also had an effect on the fortunes of the nobility, of which he was a member. Towards this end, he stresses often that among the 'ancients', rulership remained stable because it remained hereditary: '...since among the ancients kingship was hereditary, so whenever a king dies, one of his *sons* according to his hereditary claim and nomination by the deceased king, ascended the throne.'[108]

While this may draw attention to the importance of succession over usurpation as a guarantee of stable political rule, it is interesting to note that Barani considers only that succession as legitimate which was nominated by the deceased king. By that rule, Raziyya's reign would have been legitimate since she was nominated by her father Iltutmish after the latter's eldest son and chosen heir predeceased him in battle.

Based on the *Fatāwā*, it is not possible to say much else because references to women are almost negligible in the text.[109] The intention of this brief section on Raziyya has been to problematise the construction of the text in a diametrically opposite way: if the use of Mahmud holds keys to understanding ways in which the text acquires authority and power, the absence of any recognition of a woman ruler helps to further problematise the imagination of a completely masculine political office — that of the ruler — which was, at least in the case of the Indian subcontinent, historically inaccurate.

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[107] See Habib, 'Barani's Theory of the Delhi Sultanate'.

[108] Mss fol. 223a; text, p. 305; trans., p. 450.

[109] The only places where women are referred to are in some anecdotes, as slaves, war booty or as mothers wailing for their incarcerated sons; but nowhere do they have any consequential political agency; for instance, mss fol. 37a; text, p. 56; trans., p. 82, and *passim*. Given the short span of her reign, marked as it was by intense court intrigue, information about Raziyya is minimal, and patchy. This has led to a vicarious interest about her life and reign, commonly seen as a combination of 'history and fiction'. This has, in turn, given rise to numerous popular imaginations; as a representative semi-historical example, see Rafiq Zakaria, *Razia: Queen of India*, Bombay, 1966.

If the 'legend' of Mahmud, as Afsar Salim Khan suggests, grew separately from his 'character', Barani's *Fatāwā* falls somewhere in-between. The various interconnected parts of this chapter have attempted to underline the peculiar and fascinating ways in which the text may be seen to be constructed. It is situated at the crossroads of *genre*, legend, myth and history, all of which are interlaced with the character of Mahmud who occupies both real and historical, as well as legendary, status. Khan argues that by the time Barani was writing his *Fatāwā*, 'knowledge of the real Mahmud was confined to genuine students of history — the readers of Utbi, Baihaqi and Gardizi. To the general public Mahmud's figure represented a mass of legend and tradition, whose memories were fully treasured in anecdotes of various types.'[110]

If this be the case, it makes the *Fatāwā* even more interesting since Barani appears both as a student of history and a layman enwrapped in the many legends of Mahmud's valour. But Khan also seems to miss the complexity when she says that Mahmud 'alone could have justified Barani's conception of an orthodox Muslim ruler.'[111] As this chapter has shown, it would perhaps be more accurate to see the *Fatāwā* as attempting to apprehend the many facets of a heroic king who has returned to literary genres in larger-than-life legendary motifs, to justify the tensions of political rule in a specifically vexed environment [the Delhi Sultanate] of which he was the historical and legendary progenitor. And Barani has attempted brilliantly to accommodate these realities. His inclusion of a number of other such heroes, especially Anushirvan and Alexander [whose literary identities were also located at similar crossroads], shows that Mahmud was not the only legitimising voice in the text. The latter two historical figures, along with the caliph Umar and the legendary Kaimurs, appear frequently in the text to uphold Barani's opinions on governance.

However, it remains beyond doubt that Mahmud is the protagonist of the text; and through the various intentional and unintentional literary schemes which Barani seems to have masterfully employed in the *Fatāwā* regarding Mahmud — the valiant warrior who destroyed the pagan goddess Manat and annihilated the Hindus and their idol-

[110] Khan, 'Fatāwā-i-Jahāndārī', p. lxii. Isami, *Futūh*, pp. 30-59 includes anecdotes about Mahmud which are broadly 'legendary'.

[111] *Ibid.*, p. lxiii; earlier in this chapter I have discussed how this statement is tenable up to a point because Mahmud was a readymade hero for Islamic rulers of the Indian subcontinent. That still holds true, but the details of this chapter have hopefully shown that this is too simplistic.

worshipping temples; the eternal father giving [occasionally 'testamentary'] advice to his sons about the rules of governance in a 'voice' cutting across time; the humane ruler who, despite his highly developed Islamic pietistic attributes,[112] was not invulnerable to the pleasures of life, including perhaps some forbidden sins;[113] the ever-masculine hero who is the legendary progenitor of Islamic rule in the subcontinent — he has tried to accommodate the various real, ground-level complications and tensions of kingship by a Muslim ruling elite in the Delhi Sultanate. There are definite strains of religious strictness, but when seen in its entirety, the text upholds the opinions of a political, not a religious, ideologue struggling to balance the components of life's knowledge gained through scholastic training, and wisdom achieved through a lifelong association with political fortunes, through family and his own years in royal service. Together, they imagine a polity that must strive for the maintenance of pragmatic Islamic royal governance in the Indian subcontinent. The next, and final, chapter considers some other motifs in the text to apprehend possible new ways of understanding the polity of the *Fatāwā*.

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[112] In political policies, Barani presents Mahmud as being inalienably Islamic. Note the two following statements: 'My governmental rules are not antagonistic to the *sharīʻa*'; 'No clear precept has been (received) in this [political punishments] respect from religious scholars [...] All that is found is the precept that political punishments (rest) on the judgement of the king. There can be no greater or more painful embarrassment for the kings of Islam in their worldly affairs than this, that they have to turn their backs on the word of God and His Prophet and that without the permission of the *sharīʻa* but on the basis of their own judgement they shed the (blood) of a (reciter) of the Oath of Affirmation [...]'; mss fols 165a, 146a; text, pp. 228, 200; trans., pp. 334, 292. Note that in the second example, Barani ensures that via Mahmud he teases out a religious element in an admittedly unclear situation [political punishment]. Conversely, he presents his own political ideas with religious overtones even in practical matters; 'affairs of the kingdom must be attended at the purest possible time — before eating and drinking. Many kings have fasted at the time of taking counsel, and have directed their counsellors as well to observe fasting; mss fol. 24a; text, p. 36; trans., p. 51.

[113] 'That he should be guilty of error, negligence or sin is a different matter, *ānke ū rā sahvī o ghaflat uftād va ma'āṣī rā martakab shud ān dīgar ast*'; 'On the grounds that he protects and propagates the faith, the evils and sins of his lower self are erased from the records of his life, *va bad ānche ū dīnpanāhī va dīnparūrī mīkunad, az nām-i amāl-i ū saiyi'āt o khatīyāt-i nafsānī-i ū rā mahv mīkunad*; and later 'his failure in supererogatory devotions and his commitment to carnal sins, *bā taqsīr-i navāfal-i 'ibādat va mubāsharat-i māsūm-i nafs*', Mss fols 142b, 6b; text, pp. 195, 10; trans., pp. 283, 12. Cf., Steingass, *Dictionary*, s.v. 'ma'āṣī' for 'sin', p. 1265.

6

FATĀWĀ-I JAHĀNDĀRĪ: TEXT AND TERRITORY

When Shaikh Mubarak ibn Mahmud of Cambay met the Egyptian scholar Shihab al-Din al-'Umari [AD 1301-48], his description of the city of Delhi was by no means modest:

[The Shaikh] told me that [Delhi] comprises different cities, each one bears its own particular name but all of them combined together are called Delhi. It is extensive in length and breadth and has a circumference of forty miles. The buildings are of stone brick, being roofed with wood and floored with marble-like white stone. In some cases, the houses in Delhi are two-storied high. The floor is paved with marble only in the royal palaces.[1]

The glory of the city was not the view of Shaikh Mubarak alone; others like Abu Bakr ibn Khallal and Shaikh Burhan al-Din ibn al-Bizi also gave equally rivetting accounts of the capital city of the Tughluq sultanate to al-'Umari. Abu Bakr mentioned houses in the 'new town', Delhi's 'twenty-one cities', its gardens 'each one stretching to the extent of twelve miles', its 1,000 schools/colleges [*madrasās*], 70 hospitals ['*bīmāristāns*' which were called *dār al-Shafā*], 2,000 hospices and inns [*khānqāhs* and *serāis*] in the city and its suburbs, huge buildings, extensive *bazārs*, numerous *hamāms*, reservoirs, and the congregational mosque with its 'call minaret' which was famous for its height: according to al-Bizi, at 1,200 feet the Qutb Minar had no rival in height on earth.[2] [Plate 10]

This description is exaggerated no doubt, but even in its weakest approximation gives the impression of a thriving urban complex [Map 3]. Delhi in the Tughluq period was at the height of its urban development, attractive and important enough to be substantially destroyed by Timur in AD 1398. But at least at the time that Barani was writing, the

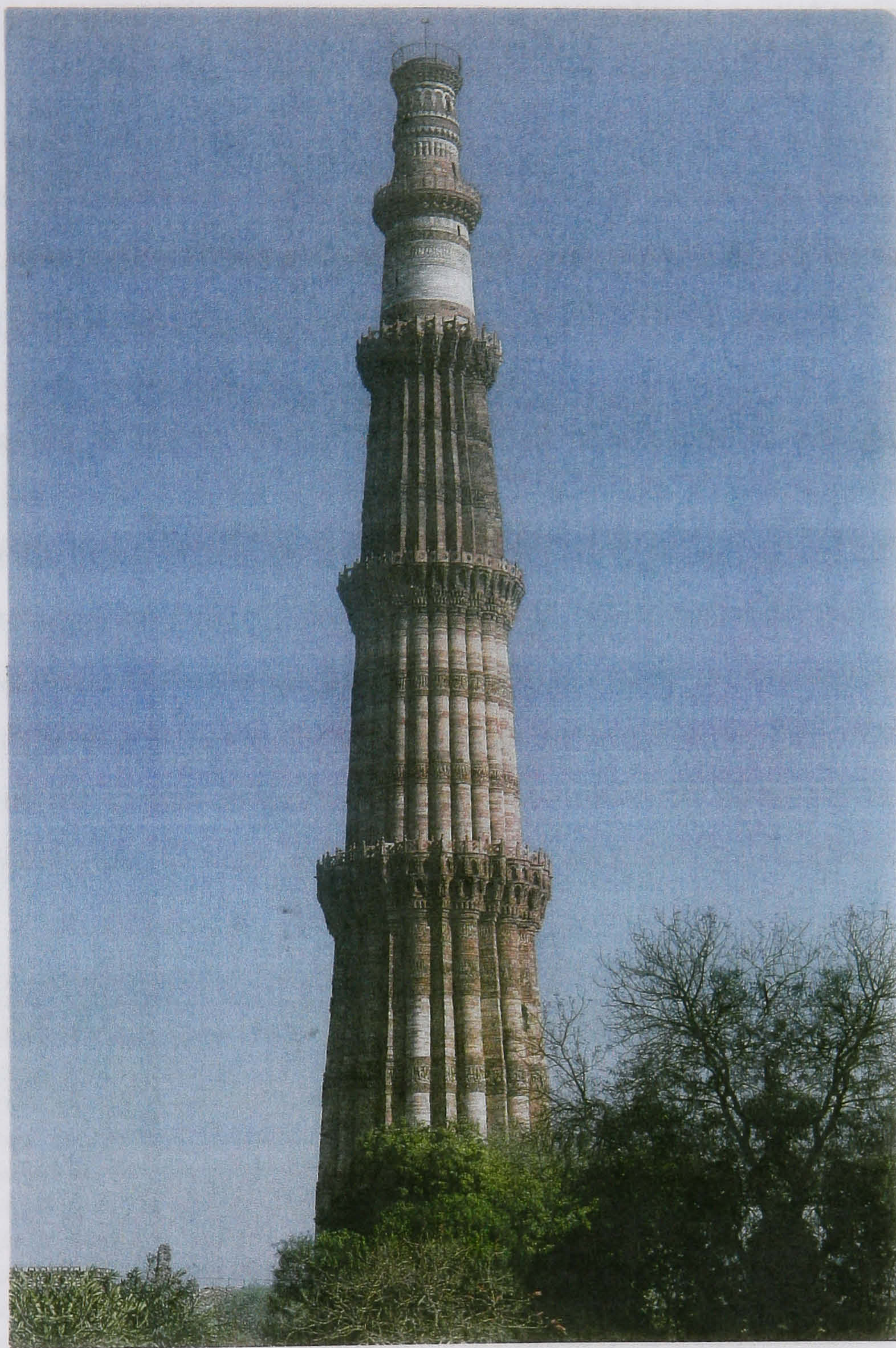
[1] *Masālik al-Absār fī mamālik al-Amsār*, trans. I.H. Siddiqui, *Perso-Arabic Sources of Information on the Life and Conditions in the Sultanate of Delhi*, Delhi, 1992, p. 116*f*. The chapters on India are available in K. Ahmad, *Dau-i Jadīd 'ala Tārīkh al-Hind min Manhtūtā-i Arabī*, Delhi, 1961. See also, M. Athar Ali, 'Capital of the Sultans: Delhi During the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries', in Frykenberg, ed., *Delhi Through the Ages*, pp. 34-44.

[2] Siddiqui, *Perso-Arabic Sources*, p. 117; Ebba Koch, 'The Copies of the Qutb Mīnār', *Iran*, 29, 1991, pp. 95-107; and Ralph Pinder-Wilson, 'Ghaznavid and Ghurid Minarets', *Iran*, 39, 2001, pp. 155-86.

Plate 10

Qutb Minar

['according to al-Bizi, at 1,200 feet the Qutb Minar had no rival in height on earth.']



1350s, it appears from available descriptions that Delhi — and its suburbs — were a bustling place. This should not be surprising since it comprised, as the quote above clarifies, 'different cities'.[3] This is important because it represents the morphological make-up of Delhi as a series of historico-political quarters, clusters of urbanity set up by different rulers as their capitals, till a large part of it was enclosed by Muhammad bin Tughluq following his failed attempt to shift the political capital to Daulatabad in the 1320s. In practice, this meant that 'larger Delhi' was made up of many settlements which may or may not fall within the precincts of the priorities of the current rulers, but had certainly benefited at some point from political preference. Some of these slowly declined, while others became satellites to the new capitals. In all, the topography of the area was favourable enough to attract traders, travellers and settlers.[4]

In attempting to engage further with Barani's imagination of a well-governed polity, this chapter deals with his opinions on two important components of it: the [capital] city, and the [subject] citizen. In keeping with the fundamental aim of this dissertation, namely to apprehend the political identity of the Delhi Sultanate through the study of a normative text, this chapter tries to outline his ideas on the logistics of a polity's 'territory', both geographical [the city], and elemental [its people]. In mapping Barani's outline of the capital city, the attempt is to elaborate upon notions of power and authority between the 'core' and the 'periphery' of the sultanate both actually and

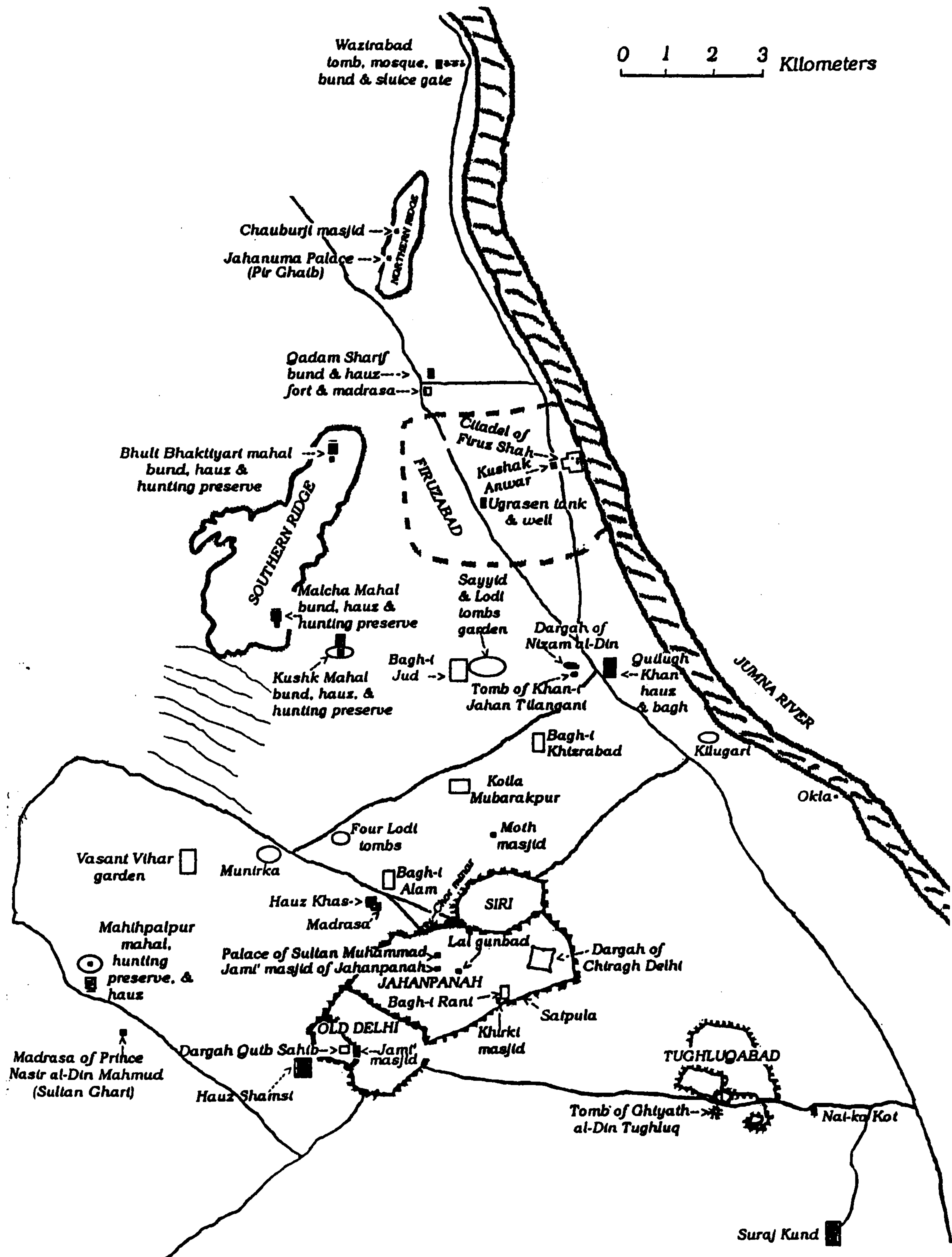
[3] For a list of all these 'cities' and a summary description, see H.C. Verma, *Dynamics of Urban Life in Pre-Mughal India,* Delhi, 1986, pp. 183-85.

[4] Wink, *Al-Hind*, vol. 3, pp. 74-75, 66, suggests that [with the exception of Varanasi] Indian cities were prone to desolation due to 'hydrological instability and other geophysical considerations', leading to 'innumerable urban sites but hardly [like] any of the great cities [...] in the Meditteranean'; in fact, he considers the birth of many urban sites in the subcontinent [including Delhi] as 'labile [...] a paradigm that was already established in pre-historic Harappa and Mohenjodaro'. He quotes Battuta re. the 'abandonement' of Delhi following Muhammad bin Tughluq's shift of capital in 1325-27, but see for instance Pushpa Prasad, *Sanskrit Inscriptions of Delhi Sultanate, 1191-1526*, Delhi, 1990, pp. 22-27, for an inscription dated AD 1327 eulogising 'Ḍhillī', followed by a panegyric for the sultan, questioning Wink's *longue durée* 'labile' Indian urbanism. Studies re. Delhi are varied: as general official overview, see *Delhi: History and Places of Interest*, Publications Division, Government of India, 1970, especially pp. 1-17; Frykenberg, ed., *Delhi through the Ages*; S.R. Bakshi and S.K. Sharma, eds, *Delhi through the Ages*, 2 vols, New Delhi, 1995, is a useful anthology of writings on Delhi, as is H.K. Kaul, *Historic Delhi: An Anthology*, Delhi, 1997. More specifically, see Upinder Singh, *Ancient Delhi*, Delhi, 1999 for a useful archaeological approach; Sunil Kumar, *The Present in Delhi's Pasts*, New Delhi, 2002; and Verma, *Dynamics of Urban Life*, pp. 183-226 and *passim*. There are some interesting studies of Sultanate-period villages: see Kumar's study of 'Saidlajab' in *ibid.*, pp. 95-118; and Charles Lewis and Karoki Lewis, *Delhi's Historic Villages: A Photographic Evocation*, New Delhi, 1997. On Daulatabad, the most exhaustive study remains Mate and Pathy, eds, *Daulatabad*, but see also N.B. Roy, 'The Transfer of Capital from Delhi to Daulatabad', *Journal of Indian History*, 20, 1-3, 1941, pp. 159-80.

Map 3

The Cities of Delhi

[From: Jennifer Lort, 'Curiously Seen: *Baoli*s of the Delhi Sultanate', unpublished M.A. dissertation, Department of the History of Art, University of Victoria, 1995.]



symbolically, and the analysis of information regarding the subject-citizen underscores the desire to understand ideas of command, authority and the structuration of power in rulership. Cumulatively, this would help us to understand better Barani's ideas of 'sovereignty' [and its components] in the context of the Delhi Sultanate.

Shahr* and *Saltanat

Barani moved to Delhi early in his life, belonging as he did to a family of royal courtiers. Considering his long service at the court of Muhammad bin Tughluq, his association with the Chishti saint Nizam al-Din [in the precincts of whose *dargāh* is his grave] as also the absence of any particular information indicating otherwise, it is possible to suggest that with the exception of his royal duties which took him to different places in the subcontinent and his incarceration in the early years of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq's reign, Barani would have spent his entire life in Delhi. His own fortunes, from early in his life to his death, are therefore located in this geographical precinct, and most of his texts too were perhaps written here, in the capital city.

This is significant when we bear in mind the overall tone of the *Fatāwā* and its imagination of the capital city. Considering the evolution of the city as a politically preferred capital, in the time of the late Delhi Sultanate it was also the area where most elites from different parts of the Islamic world would come if they chose to do so to seek patronage. But here they would compete — especially in the time of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq — not just with other Muslim elites, but also with non-Muslim claimants to royal service and privilege. Delhi was therefore not just the court of the ruler and his servants, but a highly contested politicised urban area, under direct political control of the incumbent ruler but one who was surrounded by and had to cope with the vestiges of earlier political dispensations along with organising and ordering his own.

There is no doubt that Delhi was well-administered, and the sultan had full control over the city and its everyday dynamics. Details from the reigns of both Ala al-Din Khalaji and Muhammad bin Tughluq [that Barani himself describes in his *Tārīkh*] leave us in no doubt of it. Apart from its native residents, Delhi being the political capital meant that it

would also be the site where traders would do their trade, and a substantial portion of the army would be resident. Being the seat of royal power, it would also benefit from royal patronage to various arts and crafts, thus attracting other professional classes. In turn, it would be marked by architecture for various purposes, and a dynamic money economy.[5] We know from other sources of experiments in price regulation and currency reform, both of which indicate the importance of regulating the circulation and flow of money, especially in and around the capital city.

In his landmark study of Islamic urbanism *The Places Where Men Pray Together*, Paul Wheatley notes with regards to (capital) cities that in the early centuries of Islam

> the arrangement was adopted in numerous settlements under Islamic control and, intentionally or not, [they] embodied a nicely symbolic evocation of the dual responsibilities, religious and secular, of the Muslim rulers of the time.[6]

This may easily have held true for Delhi in Barani's time; in fact, architectural evidence suggests that the sultans built a number of structures. Wheatley's 'most impressive structure in any city in the Islamic world',[7] the *masjid al-jāmi'* [congregational mosque], is one of the earliest sultanate structures in Delhi. In fact, it seems possible to speculate that the presence of a multiplicity of 'capital cities' gave birth to a fairly large urban 'Delhi', which would remain in the surroundings of whichever new city was born. Together, it could be imagined to come close to a realistic version of the image we get from al-'Umari's *Masālik* cited earlier.

In the case of Delhi, the urban phenomenon was made more complicated by the presence of the Sufi saints in the many 'cities', and occasionally in the capital city itself. This peculiar factor could often lead to directly confrontational situations between the ruler and the saint, both of whom claimed hegemonic authority political and spiritual over the territory. Such situations had strong political undertones; as Sunil Kumar has

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[5] Paul Wheatley, *The Places Where Men Pray Together: Cities in Islamic Lands, Seventh through the Tenth Centuries*, Chicago, 2001, p. 229, notes rather perceptively [for the period up to the 10th century] that while textual sources often mention buildings and architectural sites, they 'virtually never provide a comprehensive schedule of the governmental functions performed within its walls.' This holds true for the period of the Delhi Sultanate as well, but changes dramatically in the Mughal period, especially from Akbar onwards.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 229.

[7] *Ibid.*

shown, in the case of the Quwwat al-Islam [congregational] mosque in the first 'Islamic' city of Delhi, the two 'masters' could also lay claim to sanctify its premises, drawing attention to the continuing importance of the mosque in the life of the people and city.[8] It is against this background that we should analyse the information available in the *Fatāwā.*

Information about cities, and especially the capital city, comes both directly and indirectly from the *Fatāwā.* The following discussion moves between opinions about the 'capital city' and the 'city' as it appears in the text, but in both cases concerns the issue of the 'urban' phenomenon.[9] This should enable us to understand better the actual and symbolic impact of it, thus buoying the discursive political structure of the text.

References to the capital and city are available throughout the text, as part of various advice. But it is possible to grasp certain political imaginations relating to them which may be seen in a light of their own, when the references are read against the grain though not in isolation of the context in which they are mentioned. The most striking of these are the references to the capital city of the ruler, one which is geographically the actual seat of power. While discussing 'diseases and calamities' that may befall a kingdom,[10] Barani says that in case of an enemy attack from two opposite directions, 'utmost effort [should] be made to protect the capital [*dār al-mulk*] and the great forts [*ḥiṣnhā-i buzurg*]';[11] the same advice — protection of the capital — is recommended at least on two more occasions: once that the king, whilst trying to re-equip himself in the face of the enemy, should protect the capital city and seek refuge in the forts, and once if he has acquired new territory and is trying to set up his base and is attacked at that time.[12] Interestingly, in the last scenario, Barani mentions that if the king is new to the territory he should not wage a war: 'resort to war and battle is forbidden in such a

[8] '[The] Delhi Sultan's dramatic public claims to the right to lead and command his subjects were most clearly articulated in his monumental architecture and inscriptions [... Nizam al-Din Awliya's conversations] also contradicted the structures of thought and belief which empowered Ala al-Din's claims to authority.' Kumar, 'Assertions of Authority', p. 40 and *passim.*
[9] For want of evidence from within the text, this discussion overlooks the *qasbāh* [military garrison town] which we know to be a reality from Barani's other writings as well as those of others. See Kumar, 'Emergence of the Sultanate', 'Introduction'.
[10] Mss fols 178b*ff*; text, pp. 232*ff*; trans., pp. 363*ff.*
[11] Mss fol. 181b; text, p. 251; trans., p. 369. Steingass, *Dictionary*, s.v. 'ḥiṣn', p. 422; the meaning appears under 'ḥaṣn', 'chaste woman'!
[12] Mss fols 181b-182a; text, p. 251; trans., pp. 369-70.

contingency'; rather, the ruler should 'seek refuge in forts [...] protect the capital city and [...] pass the time'.[13]

What is significant for our concerns in these references is the importance that Barani attaches to 'protecting the capital' in the three different scenarios. This is especially true of the last example, where the area has been conquered and acquired recently. The logical conclusion is that without the capital city, the reign of the ruler would have no concrete territorial base. But these advice gain significance when we map them in the broader context of other references to the *dār al-mulk.*

The importance of the solidity of the capital city as a political concept in Barani's text is sustained, for instance, when he mentions that the shift of capital ['the king ought to establish his capital in another territory'][14] should be resorted to as a last contingency, and immediately follows it up by saying that this has seldom been practiced 'for the emigration of the people from a territory or a country will be very difficult'.[15] While on the one hand this resonates with Muhammad bin Tughluq's shift of capital from Delhi to Daulatabad in the face of possible Mongol attacks and the attendant demographic misfortunes that accompanied it, the statement in itself highlights a couple of other things.

First, by discouraging the transfer of capital, Barani is drawing attention to the symbolic political importance of the capital city, one that is highlighted by his use of the phrase *dār al-mulk* [lit., territory of possession/dominion].[16] His constant refrain that the ruler should try to protect the capital and the great forts signifies the importance of the capital in the political structure of the larger realm of governance. He locates the ruler squarely within the confines of the capital city: elsewhere, while discussing the campaigns of Mahmud of Ghazni, he says that 'the (third) divine gift due to which it was possible for Mahmud *to leave his capital and conquer the world ....*'[17] Note that Barani does not refer to Mahmud leaving his 'kingdom', for instance the *dār al-Islām* to conquer the *dār*

[13] Mss fol. 182a; text, p. 251; trans., p. 370.
[14] Mss fol. 181a; text, p. 250; trans., p. 368.
[15] *Ibid.*
[16] Steingass, *Dictionary*, s.v. 'dār'/ 'dār al-mulk', pp. 495-96; s.v. 'mulk', p. 1310. Note that Barani chooses not to refer to it as 'dār al-hukūmat' which also means 'capital city', *ibid.*, p. 496.
[17] Mss fol. 174a; text, p. 239; trans., p. 352; emphasis mine.

al-Ḥarb, rather it is the 'capital city' that is juxtaposed with the 'world', overlooking the larger 'kingdom' in which the capital was located, and which was also under political governance by the ruler.

Second, the reference to the troubles of the emigration of the populace draws attention to the importance of the citizenry who comprise that fabric of the capital. Obviously, Barani was not suggesting that in an extremely adverse situation, the king could move only his court to a new territory; he was presuming that the shift of capital would include the peoples of the capital city as well. We will return to this in the next section.

The capital city is thus not just a geographical space under the direct control of the ruler and where the royal court is located, but is an essential symbolic component of the political discourse of the *Fatāwā*. Control and possession of it is a singularly important act, which may be forgone only in an extreme contingency, and that too grudgingly so.[18]

This should not take us by surprise, since the political capital was always the greatest beneficiary of royal patronage. Political Islam across the globe at this time shows that it were the political capitals which became the refuge of all things good [and bad, as the examples below will show]. Art, architecture, the crafts, trade, and intellectuals of all kinds sought royal patronage and thus flocked to the capital city. Consequently, the 'capital of the king [became] the metropolis of the world on account of the flocking together of an immense number of skilled and trained men of every art and craft.'[19] This benefited both the ruler and the ruled, the advantages of which were not concealed either from the 'scholars' or the 'wise'.[20] The components that made up the symbolic power of the king's capital is thus expanded to include people, the gifted and the talented.

But this did not mean, of course, that the capital city did not possess its vices. Early in the text, Barani refers to the sinful activities of 'tavern-keepers, harlots, and gamblers, *khamārān o zamārān o qamārān*', and slightly later of 'sodomists, *makhānīs*', etc. His

[18] At the other end of the scale, Wagoner, *Tidings of the King*, pp. 33-50, has analysed an equally interesting and creatively narrativised text, the *Rāyavācakamu*, where the rulers of Vijayanagara are shown to possess authority 'because of a supernatural power derived from its physical siting [the capital city].' *Ibid.*, p. 11. This seems inapplicable to the capital city of the *Fatāwā*.

[19] Mss fol. 93b; text, p. 134; trans., p. 189.

advice to the ruler in this matter is interesting. He suggests that if neither threats nor insults stop them, 'if respect for the faith and fear of the king's orders do not dissuade them, *sharm-i imān va khwof-i manaḥ-i pādshāh daman-i īshān nagīrad*', from the '*open and public* [*i'lānān va ijhārān*] practice of their obscene vices and dirty sins', his punishments include exile from the capital 'in order that they may settle down in secluded corners'; alternatively, 'they should be treated very severely, so that they are compelled to leave the capital and go to the countryside'. Further, 'these groups of people [...] should be directed to hide themselves outside the cities in towns and villages and in corners and huts'. [21]

The question of the publicness of sin and vice appears again and again in the *Fatāwā*, both directly and by default. He quotes later from the fictional *Tārīkh-i Khulāfā-i Abbāsī* that Haroun al-Rashid sought advice from 'a pious man of the day' Fuzail Ayaz, who said in eulogy of Haroun that he [Fuzail] knew that in Haroun's reign 'regraters, usurers, cheats and swindlers cannot regrate, take usury [*sic*], or cheat or swindle *openly* in [his] reign'; that because of the fear of his punishments 'people have withdrawn their hands from the (*open and public* practice) of unlawful actions; and that 'the sinners and the iniquitous are not able to practice their sins *openly*'.[22]

Note that in the examples above, Barani does not ask for the 'sinners' to be incarcerated, and less so to be killed.[23] They are to simply become invisible, and here too [his concern is] only within the cities. They may, in fact, they *should*, according to the text, go to the 'countryside', 'towns and villages', 'corners and huts', etc. To put it in another way, he is only asking for the 'deviant' to be made invisible since, according to his own text, they may not heed even the advice of the king. This in turn draws attention to the limitations on the king's actual powers when it comes to 'ordering' the society on the lines of religious demands and expectations. By asking the ruler to exile 'these groups' outside the capital, Barani is exorcising the *capital*, not *society*, of what he considers sin and vice. And that too is not entirely possible in the capital city. Thus, he says that

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[20] *Ibid.*
[21] Mss fol. 8b; text, p. 13; trans., pp. 16-17; emphasis mine.
[22] Mss fol. 15b; text, p. 23; trans., p. 32.
[23] The punishment of death he reserves for those who 'eat in public or commit dirty sins publicly' during Ramazan; mss fol. 9a; text, p. 14; trans., p. 18.

the kings should not permit the open and public practice of anything forbidden by the sharī'a, but if in secret and in private some persons [...] are accustomed to the profession of these sins, no severe enquiries should be made about them.[24]

Only those actions should be punished which are visible to the officials [*muḥtāsib*]; this includes *bidat* [innovation], but here too Barani adds, rather radically since he was an established *ālim* himself, that it should be overthrown 'as far as possible': 'whatever forbidden practices are observed by the *muhtāsib*s and judicial officers or come to the notice of the general public, they should be totally uprooted and suppressed, and whatever is private and secret need not be revealed.'[25]

This partial cleansing and ordering of the capital city, dependant on a somewhat myopic vision of the larger political realm, draws attention to the many unIslamic realities of Islamic political governance. Similarly, instances are found with regards to the practice of regrating, music halls, and all such things that the educated, privileged elite would consider 'forbidden'.[26]

The 'protection' of the capital city that Barani is talking about [cited earlier] is thus much broader and less literal than appears at first. The capital is not just a geographical space which should be protected against enemies, but a territory which should be cleansed of visible sin and inequity. The fact that this was possible only up to a point and not more is suggested not only from the instances above, but also indirectly from other examples in the text. One prominent example appears in his discussion of the army. Barani advises the king that 'peace of mind' is important for the soldier to fight well; this includes 'all things [...] which they can find in the capital' and so should be made available in the army camp as well.

All groups of people without whom either religious amusements and (worldly) affairs are not possible, such as religious scholars, mystics, jurisconsults, physicians, astrologers, artisans,

[24] Mss fols 8b-9a; text, p. 13; trans., p. 17; note that on fol. 175b; text, p. 241; trans., p. 356, Barani similarly tempers 'detailed investigation into the possession of beautiful slave girls and handsome slave boys' by soldiers in the field.

[25] Mss fol. 9a; text, p. 12; trans., p. 17.

[26] Mss fols 92a, 8b; text, pp. 132,13; trans., pp. 186, 17. For regraters too, Barani specifies that 'never and under no circumstances [should they be permitted to regrate] *in the capital*'; emphasis mine.

shopkeepers, merchants, caravan merchants, courtesans, musicians, drum beaters, buffoons, tavern-keepers, jugglers, storytellers, wrestlers and jokers should be present in all long and distant campaings, so that *seeing them the soldiers will think that they are still in the capital …*'[27]

Conversely, then, all these comprised life in the capital for the army, and others! The capital city was therefore the hub of a lot of [artistic] activities, both high and low, a complex social weave which catered to the needs and expectations of various classes. The attachments that Barani seeks for the army in the quote above underline both their prevalence and prominence in the fabric of life in the capital city, to take Barani literally.

The image of the capital city that we thus acquire is one which, by its very composition, is contested. It is the actual seat of power, the symbol of Islamic sovereignty and kingly authority. It is the arena of action for royal officals, who are bound to uphold the commandments of law, which in the case of political Islam lies somewhere between religious insistence and political pragmatism. What is important is that Barani textualises this political pragmatism when he says that only the public visibility of sin and wrongdoing should be checked, but 'state' interference should neither go too far, nor too deep. The balance that Barani is trying to strike over here is evident in the examples of Marv and Baghdad that he cites in two different parts of the text. In both instances, Barani draws attention not to the arrival of sins in these cities after the collapse of royal authority, but to their becoming public. He quotes from the fictional *Ma'āsir al-Khulāfā* that after the death of Haroun al-Rashid in 'the City of Peace (Baghdad), sin and wickedness *became public*';[28] similarly, he quotes from the fictional *Tārīkh-i Khulāfā-i Abbāsī* that when the caliph al-Mamun decided to revert to the ways of the Orthodox caliphs and adopted their ways of piety and did not 'rule' according to contemporary political traditions 'molestors and opponents of the Faith, who had been craving for such a day, *came openly …*'[29]

Without these, and without all that Barani forbids should be visible in the capital city, both the symbolic and actual power of politics would be enhanced, such that 'political

[27] Mss fol. 175b; text, p. 241; trans., p. 355; emphasis mine.
[28] Mss fol. 125b; text, p. 174; trans., p. 251.

capital [becomes] political capital'![30] It was through the image of the capital that 'the whole edifice of Islam [was] elevated', and 'by whose status the status of all other Muslim cities is raised'.[31] Thus, for Barani the capital city, with all its subjective vices, was the emblem of proper governance, one that could be held up to the larger realm to look at and perhaps imitate.[32] While the references to the making of the capital city are not aplenty in the *Fatāwā*, when seen together they uphold a certain design, informed by political expediency but couched in religious righteousness. What is interesting and significant is that by the time Barani was writing this text, the Delhi Sultanate had reached the peak of its territorial expansion and had, in fact, lost some of its erstwhile territories [for instance, in the Deccan]. Despite this political reality, or perhaps because of it, Barani clearly creates an asymmetrical relationship between the centre and the outlying areas, the 'core' and the 'periphery'. The capital city is unabashedly the cynosure of royal attention in every way, the cradle of governance and the seedbed of all virtue. Yet, the realism of the text is evident in the limitations that the texts admits to in the pursuit of this goal. Sinners may or may not listen to the king's admonitions, inequity may or may not be erased; all that the ruler can do is to perennially strive to attain that goal, and in doing so, exile visible sin from the capital to other areas, thus creating a real and symbolic relationship of inequality between the centre and the larger, governed world, the *jahān*.

This section has suggested that the capital city in particular, and urban spaces in general, became the foci of political consolidation both literally and symbolically, examples that would be upheld within the polity for other areas to emulate. Evidence suggests that this was not necessarily so, and as mentioned earlier, Wink has suggested recently that the fortunes of most of the cities in the subcontinent were hostage to environmental fortunes, and even the most politically mature cities — such as Delhi — could be dislocated very easily.[33] This may or may not have been true if one sees 'Delhi' as many cities rather than one single unified territory which it was not at least in Sultanate times.

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[29] Mss fols 89b-90a; text, pp. 128-29; trans., p. 182.
[30] Burton Stein, *Vijayanagara*, Cambridge, 1989, p. 71.
[31] Mss fol. 120b; text, p. 168; trans., pp. 240-41.
[32] But the ruler did have to control 'gross fraud' in the capital, for whatever happened in the capital 'would be imitated in all his provinces'. Mss fol. 93a; text, p. 134; trans., p. 188.
[33] While I doubt [*n.* 4 *supra*] Wink's sweeping generalisations about the fate of cities in the subcontinent from Harappa to the 15th century, his attention to environmental factors is interesting and welcome in light of the lack of such studies. As a useful initial exercise in the study of environmental history, see also Jos

But this does not mean that the centre and its inhabitants would exist in a vacuum, and those outside this hallowed geographical space of the city would remain incidental to the politics of the kingdom. In fact, the *Fatāwā* dwells in sufficient detail on the roles and expectations of the people throughout the kingdom, and how they contribute to the primary concern of the text, the maintenance of kingly rule. To superimpose a typical characteristic of the urban phenomenon according to Wheatley, 'an urbanized society subsumes two functionally distinct components. On the one hand there is the city dweller proper, the resident within the urban enclave; and on the other there is the urbanized countryman who lives in terms of the city but not in it, who is bound up to the city in an asymmetrical structural relationship that requires him to produce in one form or another a fund of rent payable to power brokers based, if not always resident, within the urban enceinte.'[34] The next section apprehends this complex phenomenon within the *Fatāwā*, with the additional, instrumental nexus that it draws between the people and sovereign power.

Āwām and *Sultān*

The most definite chords tying the 'core' to the 'periphery' appear in the mention of the various state officials who, the *Fatāwā* suggests, were integral to the *jahāndārī* of its imagined polity. As with its symbols, so with its execution, governance was a performative act which comprised the motivated interests of the ruling group, realised through its many economic and political pursuits. Ideals central to this edifice — justice, majesty, grandeur, prestige, awe, even 'Islam' — could be substantially effected mainly through the officials and/or allies of the court throughout the realm. In the *Fatāwā*, they included governors, *muḥtāsibs*, *bārīds*, *kotwāls*, *shahnās*, etc. who would either work in conjunction with or control local power-heads like *zamīndārs* — and who played an intrinsic part in the actual and symbolic flow of governmental authority from one nodal arena to another.[35]

Gommans, 'The Silent Frontier of South Asia, c. AD 1100-1800', *Journal of World History*, 9,1, 1998, pp. 1-23.

[34] Wheatley, *The Places Where Men Pray Together*, p. 228.

[35] Note the interesting reference to *zamindārs* in an anecdote from the fictitious *Tārīkh-i Sikandarī* relating to Alexander's conquests of the world: '... for the maintenance of his own supreme command and royalty, [Alexander] appointed *bārīds* from the chosen and the reliable officers of his own country with full pomp and dignity over [the] rulers and *zamīndārs* in every land'; mss fol. 80b; text, p. 117; trans., p. 164.

The relationship of control thus engendered between the centre and the larger political realm was based on varying forms and degrees of coercion, or, to use a traditional category of academic understanding, 'power'. Such historiography saw authoritarian coercion as the fundamental strain of cohesion in the otherwise disparate and recalcitrant polity, prone to centrifugal tendencies. Local rebellions are cited as evidence for this belief, often overlooking the fact that periods marked by high degrees of centralisation and authoritarianism — such as that of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq — also saw a profusion of local rebellions, thus nullifying the logic that weak central power meant greater political assertion of areas outside the direct control of the centre.[36]

These concerns are outside the purview of this dissertation since the *Fatāwā* does not provide much information on them; but the underlying assumptions of such arguments deprives the people — both privileged and common, subsumed in the category *āwām*[37] — of any agency in the consolidation and maintenance of kingly authority, grandeur and power. Simultaneously, it projects kingly rule as totally authoritarian and absolute. Centralisation of power was a fundamental feature of all pre-modern monarchical rulerships, and should not be cause for surprise; what is interesting about the *Fatāwā* is that there are a number of examples where this authoritarianism is made vulnerable by a degree of [subjective] answerability of the ruler to the ruled. The chronic violation of it, according to Barani, would lead to the loss of prestige and respect for the ruler, which in turn is the sign of its impending downfall.

Although the *Fatāwā* speaks of the ruler being God's chosen person, His 'shadow on earth',[38] the realism of the text is visible in an opening statement that appears towards the end of the text. In starting to advise the rulers about the fact that no one should ever gain ascendancy over the king, the text says:

[36] Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate*, pp. 255-76.

[37] My use of 'subject-citizen' [including 'people', 'subjects', 'citizens'] draws broadly from Ronald Inden's 'inclusive citizenship', and definition of *jānapada* 'and its synonym *prajā* [...] to constitute and designate a class of people which was at once territorial, economic and political', but while Inden's *prajā* resided *only* in the countryside, the *Fatāwā*'s 'subject-citizen' is more universal. See Ronald Inden, *Imagining India*, second impression, London, 2000, pp 219-20. Nowhere is 'citizen' used in its modern sense; for the latter see Immanuel Wallerstein, 'Citizens All? Citizens Some! The Making of the Citizen', *CSSH*, 45, 4, 2003, pp. 650-79 from an inexhaustible list of writings on the subject.

[38] Mss fols 93a, 167b, 195a; text, pp. 133-34, 232, 269; trans., pp. 188, 342, 396. See also fol. 194b; text, p. 268; trans., p. 396: 'Such are the kings who in this world are given the status of the "axis of the earth" [*qutb-i ālam*], and (in the other world) find a place under the shadow of the divine throne of the Lord.'

Sultan Mahmud says: O Sons of Mahmud! You should know that kingship means dominance, which a man obtains over a country or a territory through terror and power, regardless of the fact, whether he is deserving and rightfully entitled or is a usurper and has no right. He is called 'king' because of his domination.[39]

So there is no doubt, and 'Mahmud' himself is saying it, that the throne belongs to him who gets it, in whatever way. But if authority and power was something that came to reside in anyone who was able to acquire it even by force, it was, at least to the textual extent, subjective to a subscription to that authority by the *āwām*, to whom the *Fatāwā* — albeit in an extreme scenario — even advises overthrowing an 'undeserving' ruler:

If the king gives the subjects an order to which before that time they had not been used and accustomed to obey, and there are (afflictions), difficulties and hardships in obeying that order; and if in spite of all this the king is exacting and severe in enforcing such orders [...] *then it becomes inevitable for the subjects to remove their necks from the yoke of his obedience.*[40]

The statement above is interesting for a number of reasons, most importantly because it suggests that the commands of the ruler should not be accepted blindly by the people; on the contrary, it asks the ruler to be careful while introducing new policies lest the people be unprepared for it. The 'undeserving' element in the ruler's office is introduced through an expectation from the ruler to not be too extreme in his endeavours, an interesting check on the potentially uncontrollable and wilful nature of the office of rulership. That apart, the quote opens another important arena of discussion regarding kingship; that of the sustenance of effective kingly authority, especially if any power is vested in the people, rather than seeing kingship entirely as an autocratic phenomenon.

[39] Mss fol. 214a; text, p. 292 ; trans., p. 430.

[40] Mss fol. 186b; text, p. 258; trans., p. 380; emphasis mine. Note, rather interestingly, that soon after this, Barani quotes the religious injunction 'Obey Allah, obey the Prophet and obey the rulers from amongst you'; mss fol. 204b; text, p. 279; trans., p. 412; more generally, see Roy Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society*, 1980, London, rpt., 2001.

The discussion becomes interesting because Barani makes it clear that while the office of kingship may be attainable by force, '*sovereignty*, which is a necessary condition of kingship depends upon the king's prestige, awe [...]' which, the greater it is, the more is the obedience of the people.[41] The actual success of rulership therefore resides in effective 'sovereignty' — the ability of a ruler to control and order a territory through absolute submission — rather than merely occupying the seat of coercive authority. But the *Fatāwā* does not acquiesce to linear interpretations in any instance; the aforementioned hypodissertation needs to be viewed together with other injunctions about the importance of following the ruler, and the indispensability of kingly rule, an unIslamic office that Islam had borrowed from pre-Islamic times: 'Claiming to be kings and yet living the life of an ascetic, they would not remain alive. And "command", which was the backbone of government would not find enforcement among the people either to a large or a small extent.[42]

Cumulatively, then, successful rulership — i.e., the combination of occupying the office of kingship and possessing effective sovereignty — depended greatly on the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, on the many interstices through which kingly authority translated itself into a social and political language of control, its success depending on the extent to which 'obedience' was forthcoming.[43] At least in the *Fatāwā* this was achieved through the twin process of the ruler establishing 'prestige, grandeur, awe', etc. in the hearts of the people,[44] and the people submitting themselves to the elevated authority who embodied those qualities. But as the following discussion will show, this 'submission' on the part of the people was not an automatic process; in fact, it was a two-way street where

just as the king is entitled to submission, obedience and good-will of the subjects, the subjects on the other hand are entitled to pardon, forgiveness of faults, veiling (of faults), connivance, very great protection, compassion, kindness and assistance from the king.[45]

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[41] Mss fols 168a-b; text, pp. 233-34; trans., pp. 342-43; emphasis mine.
[42] Mss fol. 98b; text, p. 140; trans., p. 199.
[43] 'Legitimacy' is a traditional academic category which somewhat apprehends the point being made here, but it usually includes the interplay of a number of other factors like rituals of royalty, etc. which are academically more developed for the Mughals.
[44] This motif is present throughout the text, but see mss fol. 64b; text, p. 95; trans., p. 132.
[45] Mss fol. 145b; text, pp. 199-200; trans., pp. 290-91.

The text therefore makes it clear that submission to authority could not be taken as given; it was a political transaction, and the performance of the ruler in these — in fact, in *all* matters — was central to the 'sovereignty' that he was able to assert.

This is a very important element in a normative text of the time: to invest and allocate active agency in the 'people', courtly and common, Muslim and non-Muslim, all of them contained in the category of the ruled. It was certainly not common to other texts of the *genre*, as was not the fact that the different identities that inform the *Fatāwā* [such as those mentioned above] functioned simultaneously on multiple planes in the text. For instance, if society was hierarchised and order maintained through the many classes it contained — say courtly nobility versus commoners, or Muslims versus non-Muslims — they also merged easily when it came to elaborating on that fundamental component of proper governance, justice.

Sultan Mahmud advises: O Sons of Mahmud, know that from the time of Adam to our own days, the *nobles as well as the commons of all communities* both high and low, past and present, agree that justice is a necessary condition [...] It is not possible for the sons of Adam to live without having dealings with each other. And in their mutual dealings man may be (strong) or weak, good or bad, *Muslim or non-Muslim*, wise of foolish, learned or illiterate, *citizen or villager*, resident or traveller, imposterous or righteous, ruler or subject, and major or minor.[46]

Justice, as chapter 4 has suggested, remains the organising motif of the *Fatāwā*; in the context of political subjects, the following quote is illustrative of the importance of viewing rulership as a sanctuary for the people: 'an hour of justice' was better than 'seventy years of devotion', and the maxim that the sultan was the shadow of God on earth reflected the idea that 'all the oppressed take refuge with him'.[47] But if justice was the primary duty of kingship, then its actual performance by the ruler lay at the bottom of the creation of the prestige and grandeur of kingship, the latter being central to the consolidation of long-term [dynastic] kingly rule.

[46] Mss fol. 43b; text, p. 65; trans., p. 94; emphases mine. Importantly, these are the opening lines of the advice on the king's justice and equity, and is intended to set the tone for the gamut of 'just' actions that inform the office of the ruler.
[47] Mss fol. 195a; text, p. 269; trans., p. 396.

There is a twin pattern in the way in which Barani uses this performance of justice as an inclusive strategy with regards to the people of the kingdom: first, the people of the kingdom admire a just ruler: 'love for the man endowed with justice is inscribed in the hearts of the nobles *and the commons*, and his existence fully strengthens the hearts of men';[48] and second, the justice of the ruler ensures that people lead a happy and contented life, thus forming the support network essential for the sustenance of kingship. 'The reason for the possession of authority by the kings, and their power and dignity, is the manifestation of justice and equity, (so that) they may [...] through the enforcement of justice, restrain and keep in restraint the hands of the oppressors, the tyrants, the powerful [...].'[49] Surrounding these two statements lies the inclusion of the people both as the arena of governance, and as the base upon which the structure of sovereign power rests, at least in part.

But before we proceed to the active role that Barani allots to the people in the sustenance of sovereign political rulership, it is essential to underline the connections that he makes between the king's 'prestige' and the people. Its importance draws upon the idea that, as with the example of the capital city, so with the 'prestige' of rulership, images of sovereignty comprised mobile symbolic capital that could be 'fostered in the hearts of those far and near'.[50] And in that, 'confidence' in the king's rulership — which was, in turn, a direct result of the justness of his actions — was central. What is important for our concerns is that a fair degree of the ruler's effectiveness of rule, status and command is made subjective to the way in which his people understand and participate in it.

The most direct information about this comes from the section that deals with 'famines and epidemics' afflicting a kingdom. Righteousness in rule consists of justice in all its manifestations, but its most volatile arena was excessive demands on the part of the ruler. We have already seen how Barani advises the people to throw off the yoke of a ruler making excessive demands, but in milder situations Barani makes it clear that the confidence of the people decreases — they begin to 'detest' the ruler — if he makes 'severe demands and minute observations', or if his rule is identified with bad temper,

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48 Mss fol. 134b; text, p. 183; trans., p. 266.
49 Mss fol. 44b; text, p. 67; trans., p. 95.
50 Mss fol. 91a; text, p. 131; trans., p. 184.

harsh measures, low salaries, high tribute, or anything else that causes great afflictions.[51] In other words, what Barani is saying is that political governance must first consider the welfare of people and society, because its structure of command and authority is based on the support base that it is able to create and sustain amongst its subjects. Proper *jahāndārī* relates to the successful ordering of the social realm, albeit through the actions of the political; in that, the political is an expanded and overarching executive category that seeks to systematise a community of people — and in the context of the Delhi Sultanate, a rather eclectic community — both through direct and indirect control. This can only be achieved when there is respect and command of the king amongst the people; otherwise, the ruler is left with no choice but to abdicate, a situation that has been known from pre-Islamic times. At that moment

> order and conciliation is broken and owing to the hatred of the *two parties* for each other, the existence and permanence of the realm becomes impossible. It is extremely difficult to cure this illness, for the consequences are the fruits of the character of the king himself. Some kings have been faced with the calamity of public detestation [...][52]

The confidence of the subjects is therefore made central to the life of rulership in this scenario. More importantly, the advice is worded in a manner as to make the 'two parties' equal players in the political game. While this may or may not have been true in fact, it draws attention to the interdependent nature of the governmental structure of the *Fatāwā*, and the important position that is allotted to the people. The question of confidence in the ruler comes up again and again, and almost always Barani advises the ruler to bear in mind the welfare of the people.

The performance of justice remains the fulcrum of the ruler's actions: till now we have known that since kingship was innately an anti-Islamic institution and required accoutrements that were fundamentally opposed to the teachings of Islam, the only way in which the ruler could hope to alleviate this was by constantly striving to meet the demands of justice — presumably Islamic justice — to be judged by God on the Day of Judgement. But a closer reading of the text shows that this was not as straightforward;

[51] Mss fol. 179a; text, p. 247; trans., pp. 364-65.
[52] Mss fols 179b-180a; text, pp. 247-48; trans., pp. 365-66; emphasis mine. It should be noted that the context of this quote is the army and its relations with the king, but while talking about 'confidence in the king', the text clearly says 'the army *and the people* begin to detest him ...'. *Ibid.*; emphasis mine.

equally constantly, and thus *simultaneously*, the ruler also had to aspire to gain and retain the confidence of his subjects which would allow him to possess the other destination that the text advises, that of stable rule. Cumulatively, these were to be achieved through 'proper governance', which is what the *Fatāwā* had set out as its own agenda.[53] Also, that God 'raises a man to the position of kingship and assign the affairs of men to his discretion and judgement, and that man ought to treat God's creatures in a way conducive *both to the welfare of his religion and his kingdom, and that of his subjects.*'[54]

The earthly performance of the ruler was therefore to be judged at two levels, the temporal and the transcendental. Between the two, the earthly was always more immediate and real; and while Barani may not admit to that openly, a constant refrain of the text has been to remind the ruler of his earthly answerability. Viewed from the other end, it was the people of the kingdom who expected this answerability from the ruler. Here too, a casual reading of the text may lead one to believe that 'people' referred only to Muslims given his general outrage against non-believers, but note the following quote where once again his literary skill comes into play in the context of the 'seventy-two creeds':

[Kings] are to remove every injustice and violence from the dealings of God's creatures, so that the seventy-two creeds may attain to contentment of heart, and everyone may devote himself to his art, profession and means of livelihood, and the world may become inhabited and prosperous.[55]

The constant performance of justice was not just for the rewards of God, but also for more immediate gains closer to home. Almost everything that Barani asks the ruler to do — apprehending criminals, controlling prices, restrained interrogation of sin,

[53] This duality is captured in the following: 'Consider the preservation of your kingdom and your realms to be in the pursuance of this object [the protection of the Faith]', where he urges the ruler to preserve the kingdom, albeit in this instance for the glorification of religion; mss fols 198b, 78b; text, pp. 271, 114; trans., pp. 400, 160-61; emphasis mine.
[54] Mss fol. 78b; text, p. 114; trans., p. 160.
[55] Mss fol. 44b; text, p. 67; trans., p. 96. The 'seventy-two creeds, *haftad-i dū millat*' is used by Barani both as an inclusive and an exclusive category. I believe that in this quote it includes people of all faiths, more so because it is preceded by the advice that the ruler should protect 'the property of the weak, the obedient and the helpless', all of which are universal categories. Importantly, see fol. 8b, text, p. 12, trans., p. 15 where he uses the same phrase to refer to non-Muslims only, amongst whom the *sharī'a* should be made current, '*dar*

financial misappropriations 'in which all Mussulmans are partners',[56] controlling extreme judgements and emotions and maintaining a balanced personality, and so on — are aimed at recovering the 'contentment' of the people over whom the ruler rules. This, in turn, has a dual effect: one, proper governance means that peace and prosperity will spread, which for Barani also translates into 'everyone may devote himself to his art', i.e., hereditary social positions, class distinctions and statuses would be maintained; and, contentment and confidence amongst the ruled will mean that they will be obedient and loyal to the ruler whom they will admire and see with awe.

And this is what the ruler needs for stable political rule; the creation of a faithful political community of citizenry, tied through various bonds of allegiance and respect to the ruler and his rulership, the virtues of which the ruler must constantly try to embody. Of course, truthfulness in actions is not limited to the king alone. Since Barani was aware that within the realm it was the king's officers rather than the king himself who were more visible, his framework of answerability for political rule and its stability covers them as well. The best example is available in Barani's advice to the ruler over price regulations. They are particularly useful for the argument being made here since the control of prices affected the entire kingdom and all the subjects, irrespective of class or religious affiliation: if the king sees that in spite of abundant crops sellers do not refrain from regrating, 'it becomes necessary and indispensable on the part of the king that, in the interests of *the nobles and the commons of the realm* that he eliminate such injustice from amongst the people.'[57] The following quote shows that even in its most simplistic journey, the ruler walked a very difficult tightrope, there were mechanisms of check installed, and at every rung the actions of the ruler were hostage to popular support and allegiance; and the role of the common people in it is gently made visible. [As in the quote above] Barani advises the king that prices should be fixed for essential commodities, because high prices affect the weakest sections of society, those who remain the invisible victims of other peoples crimes.

haftad-i dū millat ahkām-i sharī'a jārī gardad'. For the 'seventy-two creeds', see Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 567; and Khan, 'Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī', p. 511, *n*. 50.

[56] Mss fol. 148b; text, p. 204; trans., p. 299. Note that Barani usually mentions Hindus as 'regraters' everywhere in the text, but here adds 'all Muslims' as partners in siphoning money from the state treasury, *bait al-māl*.

[57] Mss fols 97a-b; text, pp. 138-39; trans., p. 196; emphasis mine.

[In] the same way as you dispense justice to those injured publicly, you ought to give justice to those who are injured secretly, e.g., infants, immature villagers and (ignorant) persons, whom cunning shopkeepers and knavish (grocers) swindle in buying and selling.[58]

This brings the common people to the foreground by merging them with the 'realm', as well as by identifying them as silent 'invisible' sufferers.

Towards this end, 'the king must strive towards cheapening the prices [...] of grain and cloth which affect the lives of the nobles and the *commons* of the kingdom', and command his officers to fix prices, for 'prestige and grandeur of kingship lies in the enforcement of royal orders'.[59] This in itself is not enough, and the king must keep himself informed of the 'good and bad actions' of all his subjects, otherwise 'whenever the commanders, officers, judges, governors, courtiers, companions, revenue collectors and accountants realise that the king is ignorant of their good and bad actions, why will they tremble and be afraid in their dealings with the *people*?'[60] For that, the ruler should appoint intelligence officers, *bārīds*, directly answerable to the ruler about news from different parts of the administered realm.[61] 'When the subjects are convinced that the good and bad actions of the nobles and the commons are reported to the king, and that office-holders [*bārīds*] have been appointed for this purpose, *they will behave like good subjects*' because 'the benefit accrues to the public at large'.[62] At the same time, in punishment, extremism should be put aside in favour of moderation in almost all matters for the sake of political advantage, otherwise 'the king will become an enemy of the people and the people enemies of the king, and the prosperity of his kingdom will turn into distress'.[63]

Contrary to his earlier advice that subjects should overthrow an undeserving ruler, Barani has another potential threat for the ruler looming in the horizon, that of the flight of a disenchanted populace.

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[58] Mss fol. 140a; text, p. 191; trans., p. 278.
[59] Mss fol. 140b; text, p. 192; trans., p. 279.
[60] Mss fol. 79a; text, p. 115: trans., p. 161.
[61] Note that in the case of *bārīds*, Barani says that the need to appoint them was felt even in the time of the caliph Umar, who lived in pristine times. Mss fol. 82a; text, p. 119; trans., p. 167.
[62] Mss fols 82b, 97b; text, pp. 120, 139; trans., pp. 167, 197; emphasis mine. Note that in the first quote Barani is careful to include 'commons' in the category of oppressors of the 'subjects', here referring to grocers, money-lenders, regraters, hoarders, etc. who may not be officials of the court but whose injustices also needed to be disciplined by the ruler.

Unless the royal court becomes the people's requirements, the prestige and majesty of kingship will not be fostered in the hearts of those far and near. All the nobles and the commons are agreed, that if the inhabitants and the subjects of the kingdom are driven to destitution due to high prices of the necessities of life [...] they will forsake their beloved homeland and their ancestral homes, and migrate to countries when the means of livelihood are cheap and easily available.[64]

Thus, it seems possible to suggest that the relationship between the ruler and the ruled was obviously not just limited to the capital city, the centre or the core areas but, via royal policies and officials, extended to all parts of the administered kingdom. Conversely, the contentment of people from all over the kingdom allowed for the basis of stable political rule. Towards that end, Barani goes to the extent of suggesting — somewhat democratically — that the opinions of the people across the spectrum should be considered whilst making appointments, in this case that of the *wazīr*, the most important court official: 'no one is entitled to the post of *wazīr* unless the nobles *and the commons* of the kingdom agree about his wisdom *unanimously*.'[65]

Further, while discussing what comprises 'right judgement' in royal actions, in which both the king and the *wazīr* play a key role, he urges the ruling class to consider 'the good of the ruler *and the ruled*', so that '*people* feel inclined towards that particular undertaking, and are anxious for its accomplishment.'[66] Clearly, Barani identifies the 'good' of both the ruler and the ruled to be mutual and interdependent. And in this the ruler was expected to be steadfast, for weakness of will would mean that 'no one will have confidence concerning his affairs, and [...] his orders will sit lightly on the hearts of the people, and bring in his loss of prestige.'[67]

All this cumulatively led to the king being considered a 'legitimate ruler', where legitimacy is derived from stability of political rule attained through welfare of the subjects, at least in the text.[68] Good governance rested on giving 'hope' to the people of

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[63] Mss fol. 141a; text, p. 193; trans., p. 280.
[64] Mss fol. 91a; text, p. 131; trans., p. 184.
[65] Mss fol. 21b; text, p. 33; trans., p. 46; emphasis mine.
[66] Mss fols 19a-b, 93a; text, pp. 28-30, 133; trans. pp 40-41, 188, and *passim*; emphasis mine.
[67] Mss fol. 36a; text, p. 54; trans., p. 79.
[68] Mss fol. 93a; text, p. 134; trans., p. 188.

the kingdom, whether it meant the redressal of an individual's complaint, or the 'people of the kingdom'.[69] The proper fulfilment of the king's obligations 'towards the *generality of his subjects*, which is done through compassion, kindness, justice, generosity, protection, and good treatment' thus lies at the basis of an ideal polity, one that would save him from ignominy, for there can be nothing worse for rulers than that 'their name and their trace [... remain] neither in the conversations nor in the hearts of the people.'[70]

And above all, not just Barani and the *Fatāwā*, but the Prophet himself has said: 'All of you will be called, and all of you will be questioned about your subjects.'[71] The rewards of proper governance are both on earth and in the court of God; what is significant for us is that the common people, *āwām*, have been carefully inserted by Barani in the creation of the multiple strains that go towards making sovereign authority successful and tenable.

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The two sections of this chapter have suggested that the political identities of two domains of rulership — the geographical locale of the capital city, and the actual people who inhabit the kingdom — may be understood from the text in many ways, all playing a role in the consolidation and sustenance of kingship and sovereignty. For want of space, they have been organised in binary categories, keeping the ruler and his urban court as the organising motif. This was possible because the text constantly addresses the ruler, and all the inferences drawn are either direct or default readings of advice/admonitions addressed to him.

In the case of the capital city, while it was undoubtedly more privileged because it was the centre of political activities, its urban fabric needed to be cultivated in a manner so that it became an example for the rest of the realm to emulate, a talisman of authority for the remainder of the kingdom. The people, on the other hand, appear in the text as a constant reminder for the ruler to not be excessive in anything, and to pursue the path of

69 Mss fols 144b, 153b; text, pp. 19, 211; trans., pp. 287, 308-9.
70 Mss fols 55a, 56b; text, pp. 82, 84; trans., pp. 112, 115; emphasis mine.
71 Mss fols 204b-205a; text, p. 280; trans., p. 412.

justice in the execution of kingship. This is achieved in the text by strategic empowerment, and the various situations of answerability on the part of the rulers to the people that are made possible. Interestingly, in trying to reaffirm certain convictions such as the importance of class and birth, Barani inadvertently brackets people from different classes and births together when he refers to both nobles and commons within the category of the 'ruled', pitted against the ruler. This, and other such juxtapositions — Hindu and Muslim, for instance — function simultaneously as the text grapples with the complex realities of its own context, the Delhi Sultanate, to articulate a line of political action made viable only when the precarious balance of governance is maintained. While the arrangement of the actors and audiences remains decidedly within an asymmetrical relationship of authority and control, it seems possible to suggest that at least in the textual world of politics, citizens — howsoever defined and understood — are not supine, powerless masses upon whom political hegemony may be asserted unconditionally. Kingship, upon which the stability of political rule was dependent, was a complex act which needed to be sensitive not only to the problems of the people, but also to their potential to disrupt it. The responsibility of keeping control over the citizens was the job of the ruler; it was not, and should not be considered to be, something that was attained naturally or by force, as a throne may be. As an important aside, it may be pointed out that both for the capital city and for the citizens of the realm, Barani suggests shift/flight as a possible remedy as a critical last resort; interestingly, in the case of the capital city he discourages a shift of capital, but in the case of the flight of citizens, he uses it as a threat the ruler must always bear in mind.Together, they redefine the nature of a governed realm of the time for our understanding, trying as the text does to constantly strike a balance between the demands of religious and political pragmatism, a recurring tension in the narrative.

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CONCLUSION: *TAMĀM SHUD*

Having hope (in Divine Mercy) I end this book, which I have named the *Fatāwā-i-Jahāndārī*, in a (state of) utter supplication. I pray to the protector of the eighteen thousand worlds, that He may take hold of my helpless hands and pull me out of the whirlpool of my sins, so that through His universal mercy I may reach salvation.[1]

Thus starts the beginning of the 'endnote' of the *Fatāwā*, leaving us in no doubt of Barani's personal faith in the Islam of the *Qur'ān*, and his desire for salvation. There are many instances in the text — most importantly, his unfailing aversion for non-Muslims — that may hint at his conservatism. But one of the arguments of this dissertation is that while Barani's apparent religious convictions suggest conservatism, a close reading of the text shows that the *Fatāwā* grapples with the complex question of political governance by an Islamic ruler.

The predominant organising motif of the text is governance, executed through a focussed performance of 'justice', set within an 'Islamic' — though not strictly 'religious' — mould. The significant difference between these two categories for the purposes of this dissertation has been that the label of 'religious' suggests an inclination that is driven more by orthodoxy of religious philosophy, while 'Islamic' is a broader, malleable category which allows for the inclusion of multiple strains of reality within a framework which broadly conforms to Islamic expectations but not insistently so, a mosaic of actions leading to the goal of the text, the maintenance of kingly rule over a subject population.

The primary exercise of this dissertation has been both osmotic and analytic; through references to quotes from the text, the dissertation has tried to develop an argument for political pragmatism in the text's own language. The quotes speak for themselves, in the language used by the author; but the choice and arrangement of evidence is intended to

[1] Mss fol. 246a; text, p. 338; trans., p. 500.

amplify certain motifs, almost none of which have been analysed thus far in historiography.

In so doing, the exercise has been both historical and historiographical, the recovery of meaning intending to show the text in new light, as a complex, multi-layered, nuanced, circumstantial work by an astute political analyst. This stands in direct contrast to the two main received wisdoms regarding the text: that its meaning is best understood when seen as the obverse of Barani's other, more glorified *Tārīkh*, and that it is a 'political theory' for the Delhi Sultanate. Neither is it correct to see this [repetitive] work as a reflection of a 'mentally unsound' impoverished courtier.[2] The residue of such historiography has, in fact, been the point of departure of this dissertation.

An initial concern of this exercise was to locate the text in a broader framework of politics and society, both particularly applied to the relevance of the text. The dissertation therefore began with an outline of the 'times' in which the text was written, to frame it in its context rather than see it in isolation of the society of which the author was a part. But the history of the Delhi Sultanate, and the Tughluqs in particular, has received a lot of scholarly attention in recent times. Peter Jackson's authoritative *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History* is sufficient reference for the context; so the first section of chapter 2 tried not to repeat the same story. Rather, the story of the Delhi Sultanate is organised around the question of service and loyalty of royal courtiers. This is significant for a number of reasons. First, slaves formed the bulwark of the Delhi Sultanate throughout its history, their reduced prominence in Barani's time being relative to their positions in the first decades of the life of the sultanate; yet, the *Fatāwā* has precious little to say about slaves *per se*. Second, and deriving from the first, the text says a lot about loyalty and trust of courtiers, supporters and helpers, both positively and negatively, and occasionally even contradictorily. For instance, on the one hand the ruler is asked to work to ensure that his subjects are loyal to him; at the same time he is admonished for employing people only for their loyalty. But such contradictions are rampant in the text, a point that this dissertation has consistently tried to highlight. Third, this retelling allowed me to highlight the importance of Raziyya's reign since she challenged the existing power bloc in court by employing slaves from a

[2] Habib and Khan, *Political Theory*, p. v.

different ethnic stock which introduced a new element in courtly service, loyalty based entirely on personal relations, rather than seniority or tribal/ethnic affiliation. This is significant because the immigrant Islamic elite in the first century of the Delhi Sultanate saw themselves as separate from the local elite population, their notions of service and loyalty dependent either on their origins, or on their status in the court, whether slaves or freemen. In this scenario, Raziyya succeeded in altering the very meaning of loyalty in courtly service. This exercise in turn enabled chapter 5 to draw attention to the absence of any mention of women rulers in the text despite the singularity and importance of Raziyya's reign both in the history of the Delhi Sultanate and in the larger Islamic political world. Importantly, Juzjani's quotes show that Raziyya had all the qualities that the *Fatāwā* saw as essential to being a ruler.

The remainder of chapter 2 focussed on the cultivation of [scholastic] knowledge at the time, the making of an *ālim*, and the effect of religious preaching — the 'social command of knowledge' — in the making of a political community. This laid the basis for apprehending a possible set of supporting structures of authority for rulers, and possible foundations upon which political hegemony may be asserted. This is especially useful in the context of the Delhi Sultanate where the nature of the subject population was so diverse, both in complexion and origin. This ties up with the comments made about the subject-citizen in chapter 6; given the diversity of the population, it was useful to elaborate on ways in which politically homogenous forms of behaviour and acceptance of authority were made possible. The social scaffolding that enabled a political structure to consolidate itself is often left unattended, especially when a study is concerned with only one text, and chapter 2 is an initial exercise in that direction.

In the case of Islamic political history, the study of such normative texts has also often been overlaid with *Qur'ān*ic influences. This is in part because scholars always seem to derive all authority from the Book, the eternal fountain of all Islamic reasoning and correctness. At the cost of being oxymoronic, this dissertation submits that such an engagement is both correct and incorrect. Deriving from chapter 2, it becomes possible to suggest that scholastic training — which involved a compulsory study of the *Qur'ān* and *hadīs* amongst other things — meant that the primary *textual* motifs and referents of any position of command remained God's Revealed Word. Therefore, almost always,

pre-modern texts made elaborate and/or frequent references to the *Qur'ān* as an unquestionable legitmising authority. However, close textual analysis shows that such references are often superficial, and occasionally meant to abet exceptions rather than norms, as some references from the *Fatāwā* have argued.

Between verses 21:92 and 49:13 of the Holy *Qur'ān* lies a huge geographical chasm; while the former speaks of 'one Muslim community' [*ummāh*] cutting across time and space and defined by a confessional allegiance to the faith, the latter says that God has made humankind into 'nations and tribes, so that they may get to know one another'.[3] This highlights the textual impulse of an imagined community, which is fundamentally opposed to the reality of Muslim [political, for our interests] settlements that came up in different parts of the world at different times. Since the primary objective of these polities was to ensure the establishment and continuance of their individual political hegemony, often in unfamiliar and hostile contexts, historical examples show that the ruling classes maintained a precarious balance between the demands of religion [or religious classes], and the pragmatics of politics. The glorification of Islam was mainly a textual insistence, stressed *ad nauseam* by the '*ulamā*, but rarely if ever adhered to by the rulers if it came in the way of political ambitions. This was especially true for the Delhi Sultanate where political Islam was confronted with a subject population, the majority of whom belonged to Hinduism, an established and systematised religion solidified through xenophobic notions of purity, pollution and taboo. Simultaneously, recent research has underlined once again the perforated boundaries of Islam, and its borrowings from other religious traditions of the subcontinent.[4]

An important consequence of this gap between *Qur'ān*ic prescriptions and the actual priorities of political Islam was that the canons and their preachings could not support a lot of kingly actions and activities, a point brought to fore by Barani's constant reference to the 'unIslamicness' of the office of kingship. Perhaps for this reason, from the times of early Islam there is a regular production of normative, prescriptive texts to advise rulers on the art of governance. Chapter 3 focuses at some length on this *genre* of 'Mirrors' literature which appear in their evolutionary course as testaments, epistles, and most often as commissioned texts, instructing either current or future rulers of the

[3] Dawood, *The Koran*, does not contain either of these two verses.

ruling dynasty on the various tactics of politic governance. The *Fatāwā* stands out as an exception, since it was neither a commissioned text nor written by a courtier, but one that was compiled as 'decrees [*fatāwā*]' by the author himself. This was a daring act, considering its intended audience were the rulers, almost definitely those of the Delhi Sultanate from whom he had already fallen out of favour. But Barani's literary astuteness emerges when he says that past writers and authors 'have confused the Laws of Government, which depend on the words and deeds of kings, *wazīr*s, *malik*s and *amīr*s, and are the essence of sovereignty, with the orders of other groups',[5] suggesting thereby the implications of writing a text under patronage and commission, as opposed to his own position which had complete freedom.

The somewhat elaborate details of chapter 3 highlight the various non-Islamic — most significantly Sassanian and Hellenic — elements that are integrated into the mainstream 'Islamic' tenets of political governance. A brief second part has attempted to trace a similar trajectory in the context of normative political texts in the subcontinent, focussing on those that have in any way been embroiled [in historical debates] with Islamic texts. Together they provide a background for an analysis of the *Fatāwā* and its contents, and bring into relief two important themes that emerge in the following chapter, those of justice and balance in the king's personality.

Chapter 4 analyses the disjunction [referred to earlier] between the prescribed and actual practices of Islamic governance. It dwells at length upon the various contesting advice in the text regarding the religiously encoded forms of justice, and the political realities of kingship. This being the primary tension in the narrative, attention is paid to many such seemingly contradictory advice. Dale Eickelman's observation that 'doctrinal' and 'historical' Islam do not always coincide with each other,[6] supports the arguments of this chapter that neither the apparent contradictions, nor the conservatisms and religiously extreme views, should be seen independent of the latent purpose of the text: to advise rulers [of the Delhi Sultanate] in the art of governance who constantly needed to bear in mind the extremely fraught socio-religious scenario, both within and outside Islam. As Barani himself says, 'I have brought in the *Fatāwā-i-Jahāndārī*, from

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[4] Gilmartin and Lawrence, eds, *Beyond Turk and Hindu;* Mittal, ed., *Strange Bedfellows.*
[5] Mss fol. 246a; text, p. 339; trans., p. 501.
[6] Dale F. Eickelman, *The Middle East: An Anthropological Approach*, New Jersey, 1989, pp. 260-61.

beginning to end, all the laws of government and temporal rule with reference both to principles as well as illustrations and examples.'[7]

Chapter 5 revisits the text from another perspective, that of how the text has — intentionally and unintentionally — been woven around the figure of Mahmud in various forms: hero, ruler, progenitor of Islamic rule in India. Yet, the many details that emerge once again embody the tense reality of him being a human being [despite the honorific of being the 'shadow of God on Earth', as Islamic rulers are prescribed to be] given to the committing of sin and indulgences. The submission of this chapter — which also includes a very brief section on Raziyya — is that the *Fatāwā* should also be seen in the context of an imagined audience, definitely royal, which will enable us to appreciate more the motifs that emerge from a reconsideration of specific addresses of a text at the time, organised around established forms of masculinity and heroism. Further, the text should be studied carefully as one which includes interesting literary devices employed by the author to enable him to mould the narrative across time and space to give it both authority and eternity.

The penultimate chapter moves from specific individuals to relative abstractions, to the imagery of the capital city and information about the subject-citizen, to argue that the text also provides interesting information about the constituent elements of the polity of which the ruler is being advised. This may not necessarily be the primary motif, but one that may be easily deciphered within the text. It suggests that — perhaps in keeping with the specific context of the Delhi Sultanate, comprised as it was by varying degrees of loyalty and allegiance of its constituent territories — the *Fatāwā* saw the capital city as the ideal to be upheld and emulated by the larger realm. Yet, it was not as though the advice of the text was limited to the capital or urban dweller alone; numerous references in the text hint towards the importance it attaches to the 'commons' of all religious faiths, and their support to rulership and the king. This puts a completely different texture to the general impression of the text which was obviously meant for the benefit of the rulers; it draws attention to the age-old axiom that a kingdom cannot survive

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[7] Mss fol. 246b; text, p. 339; trans., p. 501.

without the support of the common people, a point the Islamic rulers of the subcontinent would do good to bear in mind.

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The leaders of religion and the masters of government are twin brothers. Without kings the world cannot be put right or kept right [...] If there be a king and no prophet, then the affairs of this world may be set right, but no men will be saved in the other world. If there (be) a prophet but no king, then without the terror and awe of kingship (the world) will not be put right; no command of religion will be obeyed and all affairs will fall into confusion and disorder.[8]

If Barani's religious convictions are never questionable, neither is his astuteness in understanding and elaborating on the very vexed question of religion and politics in Islam. As the quote above shows, Barani is clear in his belief that the offices of *both* the prophet and the king are insufficient for the maintenance of this world, one whose powers are limited in the best of times. These submissions are interesting, and marked by a political realism that would be expected from an experienced political analyst like himself; they clarify in no uncertain terms that in spite of the many strains that tie up the two offices of religion and politics [especially in the early centuries of Islam], the two offices were fundamentally separate, with separate objectives. Political pragmatism required a number of unIslamic actions without which the goals of politics could not be achieved; thus, politics should hope to conform to Islamic injunctions as far as possible, and constantly bear in mind the ultimate end ['Day of Judgement'], and answerability to God. The *Fatāwā* has a number of instances to underline this belief; and the evidence in turn is marked by the typical contradictions of Barani reflecting not lack of clarity in his thought but an attempt to apprehend and accommodate the many pulls and pushes of governance.

It would be fairly easily to make the point that Barani was a deeply religious person, a firm believer in the precepts of Islam. But this dissertation has tried to suggest that in the case of the *Fatāwā*, such beliefs do not necessarily translate into religious/political bigotry; on the contrary, the swings within the text suggest the agonised engagement of

[8] Mss fol. 247b; text, p. 340; trans., p. 504.

a person trained in the religious precepts but experienced in the reality of political life, in a setting where the largest part of the subject population was outside the pale of Islam. What the *Fatāwā* therefore does is to constantly try to outline the various needs and expectations of a properly governed Islamic polity, *importantly*, one which is inclusive of exceptions and not one that conforms rigidly to textual prescriptions and expectations.

In the case of the question of religion and politics and their accommodation in the art of governance, this issue comes to be organised around the persons of the prophet and the king. If the two appear to be essentially opposed to one another, they are also put in a sort of genealogical arrangement, starting with Muhammad who combined in him the persons of both prophet and king, to the time of the rightly guided caliphs, when the various anxieties of expanding [political] Islam meant that the caliphs had to use a variety of tactics, both Islamic and otherwise, to guide the community of believers whose ordering could not be taken for granted. The contemporary Islamic rulers came after them, and were informed by the many pre/unIslamic rituals of royalty that were considered essential for political dominance and kingly rule [for instance, grandeur].

Barani tries to locate his decrees somewhere in between all this; but his priorities are very clear from the outset — rulership and governance — and he does not waver from them even once. Note for instance that while Barani often laments the passing of the age of the Pious Caliphs, he also accepts it without any pretence or remorse. Nowhere does he suggest ways in which society may be reverted back to those pious times; rather, very pragmatically, he advises the king about how the present situation may be managed. No doubt, the glory of Islam is one of his destinations, confessed in a number of ways throughout the text, but it does not supersede the other [and I contend more important] concern of the text, namely the maintenance of kingship. He continues to advise the ruler about how to achieve the ordering of society and community — which would lead to the creation of a political citizenry of subjects — upon which political authority may be inscribed. The basis of this is the retention of kingship and monarchical power through a complex 'performance' of roles and duties. Interestingly, nowhere does Barani consider any other alternative form of governance; he is convinced that in his time [more corrupt from the early Islamic times], kingship is the most

appropriate form of rule, obedience to the commands of those chosen by God being sanctioned in the *Qur'ān* itself.

But there were other tensions in this story, most importantly that even within this textually sanctioned command community, no form of authority could ensure complete and unqualified obedience. Yet, ironically, without the obedience of the people at large neither of the two offices of prophethood and kingship could retain their potency and authority. While the time of the Pious Caliphate was certainly less corrupt than Barani's time, even the caliphs had to employ *bārīd*s who would bring them information from different parts of the governed realm to keep the caliph informed of possible recalcitrance, amongst other things. Such evidence suggests that despite his beliefs, Barani also had a very clear understanding of the realities of political structures in society, and their fortunes.

Barani's entire *Fatāwā* is therefore aimed at advising the ruler to achieve this fine balance. Implicit in it is the recognition that kingly power is subjective to subscription to his authority by the people [to some degree], but even *with* it his powers are limited; not only can he not stop natural disasters like floods, famines and epidemics, he also cannot ensure the complete eradication of forbiddances and sin. All he can do is to try and keep it in check, part of which is overlooking them, thus accepting the fact that his command is not absolute.[9]

But perhaps the most dynamic reality that comes through from the quote at the start of this section is the implicit admission that religion and politics are in reality separate domains, no doubt tied to [and perhaps dependent upon] one another in important ways, but they are not one and the same. Further, they are two totally separate and different offices requiring respective office-holders; and finally, that *both* are necessary for the proper functioning of society. If the work of these two complement one another, it would lead, at least according to the *Fatāwā*, to the making of an ideal Islamic polity. The 'political' and the 'religious' are therefore innately combined, and the ordering of both forms the base of a successful imperial command structure.

[9] Mss fol. 8b; text, p. 13; trans., p. 16, where he says with regards to the prohibition of sins that 'if respect for the Faith and *fear of the King's orders, khwof-i manaḥ-i bādshāh*, do not dissuade them [...]', suggesting very clearly the subjective absolutism of the king's orders.

The advice that he provides to the rulers therefore surround the act of governance; the ruler has primacy over here simply because at no point does Barani give any advice to anyone but the ruler himself, although he makes the ruler's authority subject to a number of variables which are outside the ruler's control. And in that he attains a level of clarity and realism which is the mark of a committed political analyst, having served in the royal court for the largest part of his known working life. His primary interest is kingship, one whose authority is not derived from the textual foundations of Islam alone, rather it is a necessary practice that may be traced to pre-Islamic times and peoples, and whose execution involves an intelligent management of policies, practices, symbols, institutions, etc. continuously imagined and contested by others both within and outside the immediate power structure. The attempt of all rulers must be to retain the balance of this precarious equation in their favour.

The position of religion in this scenario is always one of 'means' rather than 'ends'. Barani does not advise rulers to undertake wars only for the glorification of religion; on the contrary, he advises strongly to take account of the enemy before going to war, as also bearing in mind the fact that in these corrupt times the wicked have often been known to gain victory over the pious. He compliments those who go on *jihād*, but he also accepts the various lapses on the part of the ruler's religious adherences when posited against his answerability about his subjects on the Day of Judgement. This constant attempt to maintain a balance between what he has read in books and what he has known of the real world of politics inserts a latent and chronic tension in the narrative, one which makes the text more dynamic and real.

And it is this tension and contestation that embodies the political identity of the 'state' in the Delhi Sultanate, whose executors [rulers] he was addressing. Political rulership was indeed a moral activity, especially when it was over a majority of unbelievers, but it was also an art of combining coercive actions with pragmatism and interest to achieve its goals of authority and command. Series of actions, both individual and official, would create webs of relationships through which authority and power would flow, an ensemble of acts that would eventually help attain the goals of the ruling class. To attain this, it was essential to establish a system of mutually recognised, expected forms of behaviour. But this was not a mechanical transaction, one whose outcome was

predetermined; the centrality of the human agency in this meant that the ruler would have to *constantly* aspire to attain and maintain this formation, one that he may in fact never attain but that should not deter him from trying because there was no alternative. Political power may be coercively obtained but was socially sustained, merging the commands of both the prophet and the king.[10] The combination of religion and politics appears most dramatically in the following quote: 'O sons of Mahmud, it is incumbent upon you, and it is incumbent upon you a thousand times, to consider everyone even though he be your brother or son, to be *an enemy of yours in religion and your government, oo rā dushman-i dīn-o-mulk dānīd.*'[11] Here he identifies 'government, *mulk*' as 'religion, *dīn*' as separate, both of which need to be protected from others, including sons and brothers.

Importantly, the *Fatāwā* also contains certain presumptions about the behaviour of the subjects. As mentioned earlier, it being a 'Mirrors' text meant that its intended audience was the king; at the same time, his power was dependent in part upon the responsibility of the people to remain in their hereditarily determined and allotted social/professional places; also, it was the duty of the ruler to try and maintain this hierarchy [by not promoting the low-born, for instance]. The alternative to this was, of course, complete chaos, the destruction of the preordained natural order of hierarchy, which lay at the basis of these structures of authority. Perhaps because of the experiences of his own life, a reality of which was the loss of privileges because of the arrival of new groups of 'loyal' courtiers, Barani is unwavering in his rejection of the virtues of the 'low born'. In fact, he goes to the extent of saying that loyalty to the person of the ruler should not be the *only* criteria for appointing officials or giving promotions [this being the mark of a usurper, *mutaghallib*],[12] a comment made interesting in light of the fact that the primary bulwark of the Delhi Sultanate were slaves whose loyalty was their greatest worth, whose status of birth was rarely if ever considered; and that a number of rulers in the Delhi Sulatante could be categorised as 'usurper' [Balban, Ala al-Din Khalaji] by Barani's definition.

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[10] The thrust of this point derives from Philip Gleason, 'Identifying Identity: A Semantic History', *The Journal of American History*, 69, 4, 1983, pp. 917-18.

[11] Mss fol. 73a; text, p. 107; trans., p. 149. Ironically, the doubt he places on 'sons' further complicates the faith he reposes in heredity and dynastic rule, as also the father-son referent in the text.

[12] Mss fol. 56a; text, pp. 83-84; trans., p. 114-15. '[As] for him who collects a large number of people on his side; cares for no right or merit in them *except their loyalty and sincerity towards his individual self* [...] such a person is called a usurper.' Emphasis mine.

It should be mentioned that the *Fatāwā* gives very little information about economics, and the regulation of it for the benefit of the king. This is important because Barani's other works suggest that he had a lot of economic details available to him; if he chose to include precious little in the *Fatāwā*, it perhaps indicates his recognition of the primary tension in rulership in the Indian subcontinent, that of the incompatibility of religion and politics in Islam. The loosely allied political realm, marked by chronic uprisings both from royal servants and independent power heads who had varying degrees of resources at their command meant that the ruler would have presided over a polity where his maximum energies were devoted to gaining superior politico-military command, rather than an economic base. We know from Barani's other works [and other sources] that this was certainly true for much of the period of Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign; Barani may therefore have pragmatically decided to focus his text more on the ideological and political tactics of governance, rather than methods of revenue extraction, taxation, etc. A caveat may be added here: that existing evidence suggests that the economic bases of the Delhi Sultanate were not developed in any concrete measure beyond the functional administration of '*iqtadārī* and taxes, their returns being uneven and uncertain; the economic measures of Ala al-Din Khalaji and Muhammad bin Tughluq should reflect the fluid nature of the economic system, and the felt need to reorder and control it.[13]

It would be impossible to categorise a text as cleverly written as the *Fatāwā*; its many referents and interests, inflected with broader notions of hierarchy, identity and power, all aim to sustain political rule, no doubt of the Islamic ruling class, but neither advises nor seeks the creation of a fully Islamised *ummāh*. In fact, that is an ideal which is at a distance from his recognised reality. Its general tone and complete absence of any reference to contemporary rulers gives it a universality of geographical application, and the status of a reflective set of pronouncements through which political goals may be tactfully and cleverly attained. It is a 'perspectival' text, informed by the author's experiences of politics at first hand as well as his training in Islamic knowledge, which sees governance as a 'mixed substance [...] one that works only when alloyed with

[13] For a useful introduction to the economic history of the Delhi Sultanate, see Habib and Raychaudhuri, *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, vol. 1; but see also Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate*, p. xiii, 'it has to be said that material for the economic history of the Sultanate is relatively meagre'.

others', less so Islamic than non-Islamic practices.[14] It therefore has place for every manoeuvre as long as its ultimate aim, 'the honour and dignity of kingship that was entrusted to [a king], is transferred to another'.[15] *Jahāndārī*, is therefore the 'ordering of the *governed* world', that which is the jurisdiction of the ruler, and not the entire world/*jahān*; and it embodies the political identity of the Delhi Sultanate in its best articulation.

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Past writers and authors have compiled many books on the science and laws of government. They have done justice to the traditions of learning and eloquence [...] But they have confused the Laws of Government, which depend upon the words and deeds of kings, *wazīr*s, *malik*s and *amīr*s, and are the essence of sovereignty, with the order of other groups. Wise men will come to know that they cannot find among books any work with the order, form and plan according to which the *Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī* has been composed. I have brought in the *Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī*, from beginning to end, all the laws of government and temporal rule with reference both to principles as well as illustrations and examples.[16]

There seems to be no confusion in Barani's mind about the value of his work, and how it was significantly different – and more accurate, one may add in light of the quote above – from that of others. Yet, the fate of the work has remained unknown, no doubt because of want of both interest and evidence.

It may be said with a fair amount of certainty that Barani was unable to gain royal favour. His condition was desperate ['I appeal to all the readers (...) for the forgiveness of the sins of the author. They should help me (...) "Help me, people of God; may God help you also"! I am quite (helpless) and impotent, (ruined) and sinful.'][17] No later work mentions the text by name, making it impossible for this research to suggest that any person had ever read or was even aware of this work.[18] In a scribal culture, where

[14] Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society*, London, p. 7.
[15] Mss fol. 248a; text, p. 342; trans., p. 505.
[16] Mss fols 246a-b; text, pp. 339-40; trans., p. 501.
[17] Mss fol. 246b; text, p. 340; trans., p. 502.
[18] No scholar has addressed this significant question earlier, considering the *Fatāwā* is a unique text from that period, and has been cited by innumerable scholars. Satish Chandra, *Essays on Medieval Indian History*, Delhi, 2003, p. 35, makes an incidental reference: 'Barani's *Fatāwā-i-Jahāndārī* [...] was written

popular treatises were constantly being copied, there is only one surviving manuscript of the *Fatāwā* dating from the 17th century. While this does not take away from the importance of the work, it does indeed put a question mark behind the actual awareness of the manuscript among later scribes and chroniclers, which may be due to the fact that the *Fatāwā* had no royal recognition [in the author's, or later, times] and was therefore out of the usual circuits of readership. It is possible that more copies were made — that would be a possibility in light of the fact that a good 300+ years separates the available manuscript from the time when the original must have been written, but they are all lost, leaving us in no better position to judge the popularity of the manuscript.[19]

If one wishes to be very strict with Barani, then he could be accused of being haughty and presumptuous, of thinking on behalf of and commanding rulers, without being asked to do so. If that be so, it was a job well done indeed; and this dissertation has been a feeble attempt to amplify that stroke of genius.

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in the later half of the fourteenth century, *but remained unknown during the medieval times.*' Emphasis mine.

[19] Note, importantly, that his *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī* is available in multiple manuscript copies from different dates and centuries.

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